

THE *John Lord 1803*

WORKS

Of the MOST REVEREND

Dr. JOHN TILLOTSON,

LATE

Lord Archbishop of CANTERBURY:

CONTAINING

Two Hundred and Fifty Four

SERMONS

AND

DISCOURSES

ON

SEVERAL OCCASIONS.

TOGETHER WITH THE

RULE of FAITH.

To which is Added,

An Alphabetical TABLE of the Principal Matters.

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SERMON XLII.

Against Evil-speaking.

*Preached before the KING and QUEEN at
Whitehall, February 25. 1693-4.*

★ TIT. iii. 2.

To speak evil of no man.

GENERAL Persuasives to Repentance and a good SERM.
XLII.
Life, and Invectives against Sin and
Wickedness at large, are certainly of good
use to recommend Religion and Virtue,
and to expose the deformity and danger of a vicious
Course. But it must be acknowledged on the other
hand, that these general Discourses do not so imme-
diately tend to reform the Lives of men: Because
they fall among the Crowd, but do not touch the
Consciences of particular Persons in so sensible and
awakening a manner as when we treat of particular
Duties and Sins, and endeavour to put men upon the
practice of the one, and to reclaim them from the
other, by proper Arguments taken from the Word
of God, and from the nature of particular Virtues
and Vices.

The general way is as if a Physician, instead of
applying particular Remedies to the distemper
of his Patient, should entertain him with a
long discourse of Diseases in general, and of the plea-
sure and advantages of Health; and earnestly per-
suade him to be well, without taking his particular

SERM. Disease into consideration, and prescribing Remedy.
XLII. dies for it.

But if we would effectually reform men, we must take to task the great and common disorders of their Lives, and represent their faults to them in such a manner as may convince them of the evil and danger of them, and put them upon the endeavour of a Cure.

And to this end I have pitch'd upon one of the common and reigning Vices of the Age, *Calumny* and *Evil-speaking*; by which men contract so much guilt to themselves, and create so much trouble to others: And from which, it is to be feared, few or none are wholly free. For *who is he*, saith the Son of Sirach, Eccl. 19. 16. *that hath not offended with his tongue?* In many things, saith St. James, c. 3. v. 2. *we offend all: And if any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man.*

But how few have attain'd to this perfection? And yet unless we do endeavour after it, and in some good measure attain it, all our pretence to Religion is vain: Lo the same Apostle tells us, ch. 1. v. 26. *If any man among you seemeth to be religious, and bridletb not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, that man's religion is vain.*

For the more distinct handling of this Argument, I shall reduce my Discourse to these *five* Heads.

First, I shall consider the Nature of this Vice, and wherein it consists.

Secondly, I shall consider the due extent of this Prohibition, *To speak evil of no man.*

Thirdly, I shall shew the evil of this practice, both in the *Causes* and *Effects* of it.

Fourthly, I shall add some further Considerations to dissuade men from it.

Fifthly, I shall give some Rules and Directions for the prevention and cure of it.

I. I shall consider *what this Sin or Vice of Evil-speaking, here forbidden by the Apostle, is*: μηδὲνα

βλασφημεῖν,

Against Evil-speaking.

3

βλασφημεῖν, not to defame and slander any man, not to SERM.
hurt his reputation, as the *Etymology* of the word XLII.
doth import. So that this Vice consists in saying
things of others which tend to their disparagement
and reproach, to the taking away or lessening of
their Reputation and good Name. And this, whe-
ther the things said be true or not. If they be false,
and we know it, then it is downright *Calumny*; and
if we do not know it, but take it upon the Report
of others, it is however a *Slander*; and so much the
more injurious because really groundless and unde-
served.

If the thing be true, and we know it to be so,
yet it is a defamation, and tends to the prejudice of
our Neighbour's reputation: And it is a fault to say
the evil of others which is true, unless there be some
good reason for it besides: Besides it is contrary to
that charity and goodness which *Christianity* requires,
to divulge the faults of others, tho' they be really
guilty of them, without necessity or some other very
good reason for it.

Again, it is *Evil-speaking* and the Vice condemn'd
in the *Text*, whether we be the first Authors of an ill
Report, or relate it from others; because the man
that is evil spoken of is equally defam'd either way.

Again, whether we speak evil of a man to his
face, or behind his back: The former way indeed
seems to be the more generous, but yet is a great
Fault, and that which we call *reviling*: The latter
is more mean and base, and that which we properly
call *Slander* or *Backbiting*.

And Lastly, Whether it be done directly and in
express terms, or more obscurely and by way of ob-
lique insinuation; whether by way of downright
reproach, or with some crafty preface of commen-
dation: For so it have the effect to defame, the man-
ner of address does not much alter the case: The one
may be more dextrous, but is not one jot less faulty:
For many times the deepest Wounds are given by

SERM. these smother and more artificial ways of Slander ;
 XLII. as by asking questions. *Have you not heard so and so of such a man? I say no more. I only ask the question: Or by general intimations, that they are loth to say what they have heard of such a one, are very sorry for it, and do not at all believe it, if you will believe them: And this many times without telling the thing, but leaving you in the dark to suspect the worst.*

These and such like Arts, tho' they may seem to be tenderer and gentler ways of using men's reputation, yet in truth they are the most malicious and effectual methods of Slander; because they insinuate something that is much worse than is said, and yet are very apt to create in unwary men a strong belief of something that is very bad, tho' they know not what it is. So that it matters not in what fashion a slander is dress'd up, if it tend to defame a man and to diminish his Reputation, it is the Sin forbidden in the *Text*.

II. We will consider *the extent of this Prohibition, to speak evil of no man; and the due bounds and limitations of it.* For it is not to be understood absolutely, to forbid us to say any thing concerning others that is bad. This in some cases may be necessary and our duty, and in several cases very fit and reasonable. The Question is, in what Cases by the general Rules of Scripture and right Reason we are warranted to say the evil of others that is true?

In general, we are not to do this without great reason and necessity; as for the prevention of some great evil, or the procuring of some considerable good to ourselves, or others. And this I take to be the meaning of that advice of the Son of Sirach, Eccl. 19. 8. *Whether it be to a friend or a foe, talk not of other mens lives; and if thou canst without offence reveal them not; that is, if without hurt to any body thou canst conceal them, divulge them not.*

But

Against Evil-speaking.

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But because this may not be direction sufficient, **SERM.**
I shall instance in some of the principal Cases where **XLII.**
in men are warranted to speak evil of others, and
yet in so doing do not offend against this Prohibition in the *Text*.

First, It is not only lawful, but very commendable, and many times our duty to do this in order to the probable amendment of the person of whom evil is spoken. In such a case we may tell a man of his faults privately; or where it may not be so fit for us to use that boldness and freedom, we may reveal his faults to one that is more fit and proper to reprove him, and will probably make no other use of this discovery but in order to his amendment. And this is so far from being a breach of Charity, that it is one of the best Testimonies of it. For perhaps the party may not be guilty of what hath been reported of him, and then it is a kindness to give him the opportunity of vindicating himself: Or if he be guilty, perhaps being privately and prudently told of it he may reform. In this Case the Son of *Sirach* adviseth to reveal mens faults; *Eccl.* 19. 13, 14, 15. *Admonish a Friend*, says he, *it may be he hath not done it; and if he have done it, that he do it no more: Admonish a friend, it may be he hath not said it; and if he have, that he speak it not again: Admonish a friend, for many times it is a slander; and believe not every tale.*

But then we must take care that this be done out of kindness, and that nothing of our own passion be mingled with it: And that under pretence of reproof and reforming men, we do not reproach and revile them, and tell them of their faults in such a manner as if we did it to shew our *authority* rather than our *charity*. It requires a great deal of address and gentle application so to manage the business of Reproof as not to irritate and exasperate the person whom we reprove instead of curing him.

Secondly, This likewise is not only lawful, but our duty, when we are legally called to bear witness

[A 3]

concerning

SERM.
XLII.

concerning the Fault and crime of another. A good man would not be an accuser, unless the publick good, or the prevention of some great evil should require it. And then the plain reason of the thing will sufficiently justify a voluntary accusation; otherwise it hath always among well-manner'd People been esteem'd very odious for a man to be officious in this kind, and a forward Informer concerning the misdemeanor of others. *Magistrates* may sometimes think it fit to give encouragement to such persons, and to set one bad man to catch another, because such men are fittest for such dirty work: But they can never inwardly approve them, nor will they ever make them their Friends and Confidants.

But when a man is call'd to give testimony in this kind in obedience to the Laws, and out of reverence to the Oath taken in such Cases, he is so far from deserving blame for so doing, that it would be an unpardonable fault in him to conceal the truth, or any part of it.

Thirdly, It is lawful to publish the fault of others, in our own necessary defence and vindication. When a man cannot conceal another's faults without betraying his own innocency, no charity requires a man to suffer himself to be defamed to save the reputation of another man. *Charity begins at home*; and tho' a man had never so much goodness, he would first secure his own good name, and then be concern'd for other mens. We are to love our Neighbour as our selves; so that the love of our selves is the Rule and Measure of our love to our neighbour: And therefore *first*, otherwise it could not be the Rule. And it would be very well for the World, if our Charity would rise thus high; and no man would hurt another man's reputation, but where his own is in real danger.

Fourthly, This also is lawful for caution and warning to a third person, that is in danger to be infected by

by the company, or ill example of another; or may be greatly prejudiced by reposing too much confidence in him, having no knowledge or suspicion of his bad qualities: But even in this case we ought to take great care that the ill character we give of any man be spread no further than is necessary to the good end we designed in it. SERM. XLII.

Besides these more obvious and remarkable Cases, this prohibition doth not I think hinder but that in ordinary conversation men may mention that ill of others which is already made as publick as it well can be: Or that one friend may not in freedom speak to another of the miscarriage of a third person, where he is secure no ill use will be made of it, and that it will go no further to his Prejudice: Provided always, that we take no delight in hearing or speaking ill of others: And the less we do it, tho' without any malice or design of harm, still the better; because this shews that we do not feed upon ill reports and take pleasure in them.

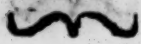
These are all the usual Cases in which it may be necessary for us to speak evil of other men. And these are so evidently reasonable that the prohibition in the *Text* cannot with reason be extended to them. And if no man would allow himself to say any thing to the prejudice of another man's good name, but in these and the like Cases, the tongues of men would be very innocent, and the World would be very quiet. I proceed in the

III. place, To consider *the evil of this Practice*, both in the *Causes* and the *Consequences* of it.

First, We will consider the *Causes* of it. And it commonly springs from one or more of these evil Roots.

First, One of the deepest and most common *Causes* of *evil-speaking* is *ill-nature* and cruelty of disposition; And by a general mistake *Ill-nature* passeth for *Wit*, as *Cunning* doth for *Wisdom*; though in truth

SERM. they are nothing a-kin to one another, but as far distant as *Vice* and *Virtue*.
 XLII.



And there is no greater evidence of the bad temper of Mankind, than the general proneness of Men to this Vice. For (as our *Saviour* says) *out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*. And therefore men do commonly incline to the censorious and uncharitable side: which shews human Nature to be strangely distorted from its original rectitude and innocency. The Wit of Man doth more naturally vent it self in *Satyr* and *Censure*, than in *Praise* and *Panegyrick*. When men set themselves to commend, it comes hardly from them, and not without great force and straining; and if any thing be fitly said in that kind, it doth hardly relish with most men: But in the way of *Invective*, the Invention of men is a plentiful and never failing Spring: And this kind of Wit is not more easy than it is acceptable: It is greedily entertained and greatly applauded, and every man is glad to hear others abused, not considering how soon it may come to his own turn to lie down and make sport for others.

To speak evil of others, is almost become the general entertainment of all companies: And the great and serious business of most Meetings and Visits, after the necessary Ceremonies and compliments are over, is to sit down and back-bite all the World. 'Tis the *Sawce* of Conversation, and all Discourse is counted but flat and dull which hath not something of *piquancy* and sharpness in it against some body. For men generally love rather to hear evil of others than good, and are secretly pleas'd with ill reports, and drink them in with greediness and delight: Tho' at the same time they have so much Justice as to hate those that propagate them; and so much Wit, as to conclude that these very persons will do the same for them in another Place and Company.

But especially, if it concerns one of another *Party*, and that differs from us in matters of Religion;
 in

in this Case, all Parties seem to be agreed that they do God great service in blasting the reputation of their Adversaries. And though they all pretend to be *Christians*, and the *Disciples* of *Him* who taught nothing but *kindness* and *meekness* and *charity*; yet it is strange to see with what a salvage and murderous disposition they will fly at one anothers Reputation and tear it in pieces: And whatever other *Scruples* they may have, they make none to bespatter one another in the most bitter and slanderous manner.

But if they hear any good of their Adversaries, with what nicety and caution do they receive it? how many objections do they raise against it? and with what coldness do they at last admit it? *It is very well*, say they, *if it be true: I shall be glad to hear it confirm'd.* *I never heard so much good of him before.* *You are a good man yourself, but have a care you be not deceived.*

Nay it is well, if to ballance the matter, and set things even, they do not clap some infirmity and fault into the other Scale, that so the Enemy may not go off with flying Colours.

But on the other side, every man is a good and substantial Author of an ill Report. I do not apply this to any sort of men, tho' all are to blame this way; *Illiacos intra muros peccator, & extra.* To speak impartially, the *Zealots* of all Parties have got a *scurvy trick* of lying for the Truth.

But of all sorts of People, I have observed the *Priests* and *Bigots* of the Church of *Rome* to be the ablest in this way, and to have the strongest Faith for a lusty Falshood and Calumny. Others will bandy a false Report and toss it from one hand to another; but I never knew any that would so hug a Lye and be so very fond of it. They seem to be described by *St. John* in that expression in the *Revelation*, *Whosoever, loveth and maketh a lye.*

Another shrewd sign that *ill-nature* lies at the root of this *Vice* is, that we easily forget the good that

SERM. is said of others, and seldom make mention of it;
 XLII. but the contrary sticks with us, and lies uppermost
 in our memories, and is ready to come out upon
 all occasions: And which is yet more ill-natur'd and
 unjust, many times when we do not believe it our-
 selves, we tell it to others, with this charitable Cau-
 tion, *That we hope it is not true*: But in the mean
 time we give it our *Pass*, and venture it to take its
 fortune to be believed or not, according to the cha-
 rity of those into whose hands it comes.

Secondly, Another Cause of the commonness of this
 Vice is, that many are so bad themselves in one kind
 or other. For to think and speak ill of others is not
 only a bad thing, but a sign of a bad man. Our
Blessed Saviour, speaking of the evil of the *last days*,
 gives this as the reason of the great decay of Cha-
 rity among men; Matt. 24. 12. *Because Iniquity*
shall abound; the Love of many shall wax cold. When
 men are bad themselves, they are glad of any op-
 portunity to censure others, and are always apt to
 suspect that evil of other men which they know by
 themselves. They cannot have a good opinion of
 themselves, and therefore are very unwilling to have
 so of any body else; and for this reason they endea-
 vour to bring men to a level, hoping it will be some
 justification of them if they can but render others as
 bad as themselves.

Thirdly, Another source of this Vice is *Malice* and
Revenge. When men are in Heat and Passion, they
 do not consider what is true, but what is spiteful and
 mischievous; and speak evil of others in revenge of
 some injury which they have received from them;
 and when they are blinded by their Passions, they
 lay about them madly and at a venture, not much
 caring whether the evil they speak be true or not.
 Nay many are so *Devilish*, as to invent and raise false
 Reports on purpose to blast men's Reputation. This
 is a *Diabolical* temper, and therefore St. James tells
 us that the slanderous *Tongue is set on fire of Hell*:
 And

Against Evil-speaking.

II

And the *Devil* hath his very *Name* from *Calumny* and false Accusation; and it is his *Nature* too, for he is always ready to stir up and foment this evil spirit among them: Nay, the *Scripture* tells us that he hath the malice and impudence to accuse good men before God; as he did *Job* charging him with *Hypocrisy* to God himself, *Who* he knows, *does know the hearts of all the Children of Men.*

SERM.
XLII.

Fourthly, Another Cause of Evil-speaking is *Envy*. Men look with an evil eye upon the good that is in others, and think that their Reputation obscures them, and that their commendable qualities do stand in their light; and therefore they do what they can to cast a cloud over them, that the bright shining of their Virtues may not scorch them. This makes them greedily to entertain, and industriously to publish any thing that may serve to that purpose, thereby to raise themselves upon the Ruins of other mens Reputation: And therefore as soon as they have got an ill Report of any good man by the end, to work they presently go to send it abroad by the first *Post*: For the string is always ready upon their Bow to let fly this Arrow with an incredible swiftness, thro' *City* and *Country*; for fear the innocent man's justification should overtake it.

Fifthly, Another Cause of Evil-speaking is *Impertinence* and *Curiosity*; an itch of talking and meddling in the affairs of other Men, which do no wise concern them. Some Persons love to mingle themselves in all business, and are loth to seem ignorant of so important a piece of *News* as the faults and follies of men, or any bad thing that is talk'd of in good Company. And therefore they do with great care pick up ill Stories, as good matter of discourse in the next Company that is worthy of them: And this perhaps not out of any great malice, but for want of something better to talk of, and because their parts lie chiefly that way.

Lastly,

SERM. XLII. *Lastly*, Men do this many times out of *wantonness* and for *diversion*. So little do light and vain Men consider, that a Man's Reputation is too great and tender a Concernment to be jested withal; and that a slanderous Tongue *bites like a Serpent, and wounds like a sword*. For what can be more barbarous, next to sporting with a Man's Life, than to play with his Honour and Reputation, which to some Men is dearer to them than their Lives?

It is a cruel pleasure which some Men take in worrying the Reputation of others much better than themselves, and this only to divert themselves and the Company. Solomon compares this sort of Men to distracted Persons; *As a madman, saith he, who casteth fire-brands, arrows, and death, so is the man that deceiveth his Neighbour*; the LXX render it, *So is the man that defameth his Neighbour, and saith, Am I not in sport?* Such and so bad are the Causes of this Vice. I proceed to consider in the

Second place, the ordinary, but very pernicious Consequences and Effects of it; both to Others, and to our Selves.

First, To Others; the Parties I mean that are slandered. To them it is certainly a great Injury, and commonly a high Provocation, but always matter of no small grief and trouble to them.

It is certainly a great injury, and if the evil which we say of them be not true, it is an injury beyond imagination, and beyond all possible reparation. And though we should do our utmost endeavour afterwards towards their Vindication, yet that makes but very little amends because the Vindication seldom reacheth so far as the Reproach, and because commonly Men are neither so forward to spread the Vindication, nor is it so easily received after ill impressions are once made. The solicitous Vindication of a Man's self is, at the best, but an *after-game*; and for the most part a Man had better sit still, than

to run the hazard of making the matter worse by SERM.
playing it. XLII.

I will add one thing more, That it is an Injury that descends to a Man's Children and Posterity; because the good or ill Name of the Father is deriv'd down to them; and many times the best thing he hath to leave them is the Reputation of his unblemish'd Virtue and Worth: And do we make no Conscience to rob his innocent Children of the best part of this small Patrimony, and of all the kindness that would have been done them for their Father's sake, if his Reputation had not been so undeservedly stain'd? Is it no crime by the breath of our mouth at once to blast a Man's Reputation, and to ruin his Children, perhaps to all posterity? Can we make a jest of so serious a Matter? Of an Injury so very hard to be repented of as it ought, because in such a Case no Repentance will be acceptable without Restitution, if it be in our Power. And perhaps it will undo us in this World to make it; and if we do it not, will be our Ruin in the other.

I will put the Case at the best, that the matter of the Slander is true; yet no Man's Reputation is considerably stain'd, though never so deservedly, without great harm and damage to him. And it is great odds but the matter by passing through several hands is aggravated beyond truth, every one out of his bounty being apt to add something to it.

But, besides the *Injury*, it is commonly a very high *Provocation*. And the consequence of that may be as bad as we can imagine, and may end in dangerous and desperate Quarrels. This reason the wise Son of *Sirach* gives why we should defame no Man: *Ecclus. 19. 8, 9. Whether it be, says he, to a friend or to a foe, talk not of other men's lives. For he hath heard and observed thee; that is, one way or other it will probably come to his knowledge, and when*
the

SERM. *the time cometh he will shew his hatred*; that is, he
 XLII. will take the first opportunity to revenge it.

At the best, it is always matter of Grief to the person that is defam'd: And Christianity, which is the best natur'd institution in the World, forbids us the doing of those things whereby we may grieve one another. A man's good Name is a tender thing, and a wound there sinks deep into the spirit even of a wise and good Man: And the more innocent any Man is in this kind, the more sensible is he of this hard usage; because he never treats others so, nor is he conscious to himself that he hath deserved it.

Secondly, The Consequences of this Vice are as bad or worse to our selves. Whoever is wont to speak evil of others, gives a bad character of himself, even to those whom he desires to please; who if they be wise enough, will conclude that he speaks of them to others, as he does of others to them: And were it not for that fond partiality which Men have for themselves, no Man could be so blind as not to see this.

And it is very well worthy of our consideration, which our Saviour says in this very Case, *Matth. 7.* That *with what measure we mete to others, it shall be measured to us again*; and that many times *heaped up, and running over*. For there is hardly any thing wherein Mankind do use more strict justice and equality, than in rendering evil for evil, and railing for railing.

Nay, Revenge often goes further than Words. A reproachful and slanderous Speech hath cost many a Man a *Duel*, and in that the loss of his own Life, or the Murder of another, perhaps with the loss of his own Soul: And I have often wonder'd among Christians this matter is no more laid to heart.

And though neither of these great Mischiefs should happen to us, yet this may be inconvenient enough

enough many other ways. For no Man knows in SERM.
the chance of things, and the mutability of human XLII.
affairs, whose kindness and good will he may come
to stand in need of before he dies. So that did a
Man only consult his own safety and quiet, he ought
to refrain from *evil-speaking*. Psal. 34. 12, 13.
*What man is he, saith the Psalmist, that desireth life,
and loveth many days, that he may see good: Keep
thy tongue from evil, and thy lips from speaking falsehood.*

But there is an infinitely greater Danger hanging
over us from God. If we allow our selves in this
evil practice, all our Religion is good for nothing.
So St. James expressly tells us, *ch. 1. v. 26. If any
man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his
tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, that man's religion
is vain.* And St. Paul puts Slanderers and Revi-
lers amongst those that *shall not inherit the kingdom of
God.* 1 Cor. 6. 10. And our blessed Saviour hath
told us, that *by our words we shall be justified, and
by our words we shall be condemned.* To which
I will add the counsel given us by the *Wise-
man*, (*Wisdom of Solom. ch. 1. v. 11.*) *Refrain your
tongue from back-biting, for there is no word so secret
that shall go for nought, and the mouth that slandereth
slayeth the soul.* I proceed in the

IVth place, to add some further Arguments
and Considerations to take men off from this Vice:
As,

First, That the use of *Speech* is a peculiar Prero-
gative of Man above other Creatures, and bestow'd
upon him for some excellent end and purpose: That
by this *Faculty* we might communicate our thoughts
more easily to one another, and consult together for
our mutual comfort and benefit: Not to enable us to
be hurtful and injurious, but helpful and beneficial to
one another. The *Psalmist*, as by *Interpreters* is ge-
nerally thought, calls our *Tongue* our *Glory*; there-
with we *praise God* and *bless men*. Now to *bless* is to
speak well of any, and to wish them well. So that

we

SERM. we pervert the use of *Speech* and turn our *glory* into
 XLII. shame, when we abuse this *Faculty*, to the injury and
 reproach of any.

Secondly, Consider how cheap a kindness it is to speak well, at least not to speak ill of any. A good Word is an easy Obligation; but not to speak ill requires only our Silence, which costs us nothing. Some instances of Charity are chargeable, as to relieve the wants and necessities of others: The expence deters many from this kind of Charity. But were a Man never so covetous, he might afford another Man his good Word; at least he might refrain from speaking ill of him: especially if it be consider'd how dear many have paid for a slanderous and reproachful word.

Thirdly, Consider that no quality doth ordinarily recommend one more to the favour and good will of Men, than to be free from this Vice. Every one desires such a Man's friendship, and is apt to repose a great trust and confidence in him: And when he is dead, Men will praise him; and next to Piety towards God, and Righteousness to Men, nothing is thought a more significant commendation, than that he was never, or very rarely heard to speak ill of any. It was a singular Character of a *Roman Gentleman*, *Nescivit quid esset maledicere*, *He knew not what it was to give any man an ill word*.

Fourthly, Let every Man lay his hand upon his heart, and consider how himself is apt to be affected with this usage. Speak thy Conscience *Man* and say whether, as bad as thou art, thou wouldst not be glad to have every Man's, especially every good Man's good Word? And to have thy faults conceal'd and not to be hardly spoken of, though it may be not altogether without truth, by those whom thou didst never offend by word or deed? But with what face or reason dost thou expect this from others, to whom thy carriage hath been so contrary? Nothing surely is more equal and reasonable than that known

known Rule, *What thou wouldst have no man do to thee, that do thou to no man.* SERM.
XLII.

Fifthly, When ye are going to speak reproachfully of others, consider whether you do not lye open to just reproach in the same, or some other kind. Therefore give no Occasion, no Example of this barbarous usage of one another.

There are very few so innocent and free either from infirmities or greater faults, as not to be obnoxious to reproach upon one account or other; even the wisest, and most virtuous, and most perfect among Men have some little vanity or affectation, which lays them open to the raillery of a mimical and malicious Wit: Therefore we should often turn our thoughts upon our selves, and look into that part of the *Wallet* which Men commonly fling over their shoulders and keep behind them, that they may not see their own faults: And when we have searched that well, let us remember our *Saviour's Rule*, *He that is without sin, let him first cast the stone.*

Lastly, Consider, that it is in many Cases as great a Charity to conceal the evil you hear and know of others, as if you relieved them in a great necessity. And we think him a hard-hearted Man that will not bestow a small Alms upon one in great want. It is an excellent Advice which the Son of *Sirach* gives to this purpose; *Ecclus, 19. 10. Talk not of other men's lives: If thou hast hard a Word, let it die with thee; and be bold it will not burst thee.* I shall in the

Vth and last place, give some Rules and Directions for the prevention and cure of this great evil among men.

First, *Never say any evil of any man, but what you certainly know.* Whenever you positively accuse and indite any Man of any Crime, though it be in private and among Friends, speak as if you were upon your Oath, because God sees and hears you. This not only Charity, but Justice and regard to

SERM. Truth do demand of us. He that easily credits an
 XLII. ill Report is almost as faulty as the first inventor of
 it. For though you do not make, yet you commonly propagate a *Lie*. Therefore never speak evil of any upon *common Fame*, which for the most part is false, but almost always uncertain whether it be true or not.

Not but that it is a fault, in most Cases, to report the evil of Men which is true, and which we certainly know to be so: But if I cannot prevail to make men wholly to abstain from this fault, I would be glad to compound with some Persons, and to gain this point of them however; because it would retrench *nine* parts in *ten* of the *evil-speaking* that is in the World.

Secondly, Before you speak evil of any man, consider whether he hath not obliged you by some real kindness, and then it is a bad return to speak ill of him who hath done us good. Consider also, whether you may not come hereafter to be acquainted with him, related to him, or obliged by him whom you have thus injured? And how will you then be ashamed when you reflect upon it, and perhaps have reason also to believe that he to whom you have done this injury is not ignorant of it?

Consider likewise, whether in the chance of human Affairs you may not some time or other come to stand in need of his favour; and how incapable this carriage of yours towards him will render you of it? And whether it may not be in his power to revenge a spiteful and needless word by a shrewd turn? So that if a man made no conscience of hurting others, yet he should in prudence have some consideration of himself.

Thirdly, Let us accustom our selves to pity the Faults of men, and to be truly sorry for them, and then we shall take no pleasure in publishing them. And this common Humanity requires of us, considering the great infirmities of human nature, and that

that we ourselves also are liable to be tempted : CON-SERM.
sidering likewise, how severe a Punishment every XLII.
Fault and Miscarriage is to itself and how terribly it
exposeth a man to the wrath of God, both in this
World and the other. He is not a good *Christian*,
that is not heartily sorry for the faults even of his
greatest Enemies; and if he be so, he will discover
them no further than is necessary to some good end.

Fourthly, Whenever we hear any man evil spoken
of, if we know any good of him let us say *that*. It
is always the more human and the more honourable
part to stand up in the defence and vindication of
others, than to accuse and bespatter them. Possibly
the good you may have heard of them may not be
true, but it is much more probable that the evil
which you have heard of them is not true neither:
However it is better to preserve the credit of a bad
Man, than to stain the reputation of the innocent.
And if there were any need that a Man should be
evil spoken of, it is but fair and equal that his good
and bad Qualities should be mention'd together; o-
therwise he may be strangely misrepresented, and an
indifferent Man may be made a Monster.

They that will observe nothing in a wise Man but
his oversights and follies; nothing in a good Man,
but his failings and infirmities; may make a shift to
render a very wise and good Man very despicable. If
one should heap together all the passionate Speeches, all
the froward and imprudent Actions of the best Man;
all that he had said or done amiss in his whole life,
and present it all at one view, concealing his Wis-
dom and Virtues; the Man in this disguise would
look like a *Mad-man* or *Fury*: And yet if his Life
were fairly represented, and just in the same manner
it was led; and his many and great Virtues set over
against his Failings and Infirmities, he would ap-
pear to all the World to be an admirable and excel-
lent Person. But how many and great soever any
Man's ill Qualities are, it is but just that with all

SERM. this heavy load of Faults he should have the due
 XLII. Praise of the few real Virtues that are in him.

Fifthly, That you may not speak ill of any, do not delight to hear ill of them. Give no countenance to *busy-bodies*, and those that love to talk of other Men's faults: Or if you cannot decently reprove them because of their *Quality*, then divert the Discourse some other way; or if you cannot do that, by seeming not to mind it, you may sufficiently signify that you do not like it.

Sixthly, Let every Man mind himself, and his own Duty and Concernment. Do but endeavour in good earnest to mend thyself, and it will be work enough for one Man, and leave thee but little time to talk of others. When *Plato* withdrew from the Court of *Dionysius*, who would fain have had a famous *Philosopher* for his Flatterer, they parted in some unkindness, and *Dionysius* bad him not to speak ill of him when he was return'd into *Greece*; *Plato* told him, *he had no leisure for it*; meaning that he had better things to mind, than to take up his thoughts and talk with the faults of so bad a Man, so notoriously known to all the World.

Lastly, Let us set a Watch before the door of our lips, and not speak but upon Consideration: I do not mean to speak *finely*, but *fitly*. Especially when thou speakest of others consider of *whom*, and *what* thou art going to speak. Use great caution and circumspection about this matter: Look well about thee: on every side of the thing, and on every person in the Company, before thy words slip from thee; which when they are once out of thy lips, are forever out of thy power.

Not that Men should be sullen in Company, and say nothing; or so stiff in Conversation, as to drop nothing but *Aphorisms* and *Oracles*: Especially among Equals and Friends, we should not be so reserved as if we would have it taken for a mighty favour that we vouchsafe to say any thing. If a Man had the

the understanding of an *Angel*, he must be contented SERM.
to abate something of this excess of *Wisdom*, for fear XLII.
of being thought *cunning*. The true Art of Conver-
sation, if any body can hit upon it, seems to be this;
an appearing freedom and openness, with a resolute
reservedness as little appearing as is possible.

All that I mean by this *Caution* is, that we should
consider well what we say, especially of others. And
to this end we should endeavour to get our Minds
furnished with matter of Discourse concerning things
useful in themselves, and not hurtful to others: And,
if we have but a Mind wise enough, and good e-
nough, we may easily find a Field large enough for
innocent Conversation; such as will harm no body,
and yet be acceptable enough to the better and wiser
part of Mankind: And why should any one be at
the cost of playing the fool to gratify any body
whatsoever?

I have done with the *Five* things I propounded to
speak to upon this Argument. But because hardly
any thing can be so clear, but something may be said
against it; nor any thing so bad, but something
may be pleaded in excuse for it, I shall therefore
take notice of two or three *Pleas* that may be made
for it.

First, Some pretend mighty Injury and Provoca-
tion. If in the same kind, it seems thou art sensi-
ble of it; and therefore thou of all men oughtest to
abstain from it: But in what kind soever it be, the
Christian Religion forbids Revenge. Therefore do
not plead one Sin in excuse of another, and make
Revenge an Apology for *Reviling*.

Secondly, It is alledged by others, with a little
better grace, that if this Doctrine were practised,
Conversation would be spoil'd, and there would not
be matter enough for pleasant Discourse and Enter-
tainment.

I answer, The design of this Discourse is to re-
dress a great evil in Conversation, and that I hope

SERM. which mends it will not spoil it. And however, if
 XLII. men's Tongues lay a little more still, and most of us
 spake a good deal less than we do, both of our selves
 and others, I see no great harm in it: I hope we
 might for all that live comfortably and in good
 health, and see many good days. *David*, I am sure,
 prescribes it as an excellent *Receipt*, in his Opinion,
 for a quiet, and chearful, and long life, to refrain
 from evil-speaking; *Psal.* 34. 12, 13. *What man*
is he that desireth life and loveth many days that he
may see good? Keep thy tongue from evil, and thy lips
from speaking falsehood.

But granting that there is some pleasure in *In-*
vective, I hope there is a great deal more in *Inno-*
cence: And the more any Man considers this, the
 truer he will find it; and whenever we are serious, we
 our selves cannot but acknowledge it. When a Man
 examines himself impartially before the *Sacrament*,
 or is put in mind upon a *Death-bed* to make repara-
 tion for Injuries done in this kind, he will then cer-
 tainly be of this mind, and wish he had not done
 them. For this certainly is one necessary qualifica-
 tion for the *Blessed Sacrament*, that we be in love and
 charity with our neighbours; with which temper of
 mind this quality is utterly inconsistent.

Thirdly, There is yet a more specious *Plea* than
 either of the former, that men will be encouraged
 to do ill if they can escape the tongues of men; as
 they would do, if this Doctrine did effectually take
 place: Because by this means one great restraint
 from doing evil would be taken away, which these
 good men, who are so bent upon reforming the
 World, think would be great pity. For many who
 will venture upon the displeasure of God, will yet
 abstain from doing bad things for fear of reproach
 from Men: Besides, that this seems the most proper
 punishment of many Faults which the Laws of Men
 can take no notice of.

Admitting

Admitting all this to be true, yet it does not **SERM.**
 seem so good and laudable a way to punish one Fault **XLII.**
 by another: But let no Man encourage himself in
 an evil way with this hope, that he shall escape the
 Censure of Men: When I have said all I can, there
 will, I fear, be evil-speaking enough in the World
 to chastise them that do ill: And though we should
 hold our peace, there will be bad tongues enow to
 reproach men with their evil doings. I wish we
 could but be persuaded to make the Experiment for
 a little while, whether Men would not be sufficiently
 lash'd for their Faults, though we sat by and said no-
 thing.

So that there is no need at all that good Men
 should be concern'd in this odious Work. There
 will always be Offenders and *Malefactors* enow to
 be the *Executioners* to inflict this punishment upon
 one another. Therefore let no Man presume upon
 Impunity on the one hand; and on the other, let no
 Man despair but that this business will be sufficient-
 ly done one way or other. I am very much mistaken,
 if we may not safely trust an ill-natur'd World that
 there will be no failure of Justice in this kind.

And here, if I durst, I would have said a word
 or two concerning that more publick sort of *Obloquy*
 by *Lampoons* and *Libels*, so much in fashion in this
 witty Age. But I have no mind to provoke a very
 terrible sort of Men. Yet thus much I hope may
 be said without offence, that how much soever Men
 are pleas'd to see others abused in this kind, yet it
 is always grievous when it comes to their own turn:
 However I cannot but hope that every man that im-
 partially considers, must own it to be a Fault of a
 very high nature, to revile those whom God hath
 placed in Authority over us, and to slander the foot-
 steps of the Lord's Anointed: Especially since it is so
 expressly written, *Thou shalt not speak evil of the Ru-
 lers of thy People.*

SERM. XLII. Having represented the great Evil of this Vice, it might now be improper to say something to those who suffer by it. Are we guilty of the evil said of us? Let us reform, and cut off all occasions for the future; and so turn the malice of our Enemies to our own advantage, and defeat their ill intentions by making so good an use of it: And then it will be well for us to have been evil spoken of.

Are we innocent? We may so much the better bear it patiently: imitating herein the Pattern of our *Blessed Saviour, Who when he was reviled, reviled not again, but committed himself to him that judgeth righteously.*

We may consider likewise, that though it be a misfortune to be evil-spoken of, it is their fault that do it, and not ours; and therefore should not put us into Passion, because another man's being injurious to me is no good reason why I should be uneasy to my self. We should not revenge the injuries done to us, no not upon them that do them, much less upon our selves. Let no man's Provocation make thee to lose thy Patience. Be not such a fool, as to part with any one Virtue, because some men are so malicious as to endeavour to rob thee of the Reputation of all the rest. When men speak ill of thee, do as *Plato* said he would do in that case, *Live so, as that no body may believe them.*

All that now remains is to reflect upon what hath been said, and to urge you and my self to do accordingly. For all is nothing, if we do not practise what we so plainly see to be our Duty. Many are so taken up with the deep *Points* and *Mysteries* of Religion, that they never think of the common *Duties* and *Offices* of human Life. But *Faith* and a *good Life* are so far from clashing with one another, that the *Christian Religion* hath made them inseparable. True *Faith* is necessary in order to a *good Life*, and a *good Life* is the genuine product of a *right Belief*; and

and therefore the *one* never ought to be press'd to the prejudice of the *other*. SERM.
XLII.

I foresee what will be said, because I have heard it so often said in the like case, that there is *not one word of Jesus Christ in all this*. No more is there in the *Text*. And yet I hope that *Jesus Christ* is truly preach'd, whenever his *Will* and *Laws*, and the *Duties* enjoin'd by the *Christian Religion*, are inculcated upon us.

But some men are pleased to say, that *this is mere Morality*: I answer, that this is *Scripture Morality* and *Christian Morality*, and who hath any thing to say against *that*? Nay, I will go yet further, that no man ought to pretend to believe the *Christian Religion*, who lives in the neglect of so plain a *Duty*; and in the practice of a *Sin* so clearly condemned by it, as this of *evil-speaking* is.

But because *the Word of God is quick and powerful, and sharper than a two-edged Sword*, yea sharper than *Calumny* it self: and pierceth the very Hearts and Consciences of men laying us open to our selves, and convincing us of our more secret as well as our more visible Faults; I shall therefore at one view represent to you what is dispersedly said concerning this *Sin* in the *Holy Word of God*.

And I have purposely reserved this to the last, because it is more persuasive and penetrating than any Human Discourse. And to this end be pleased to consider in what company the *Holy Ghost* doth usually mention this *Sin*. There is scarce any *black Catalogue of Sins* in the *Bible* but we find this among them; in the company of the very worst *Actions* and most irregular *Passions* of men. *Matth. 15. 19. Out of the heart, says our Saviour, proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, false-witness, evil-speakings*. And *Rom. 1. 29.* the *Apostle* ranks *back-biters* with *fornicators*, and *murderers*, and *haters of God*; and with those of whom it is expressly said, *1 Cor. 6. 10.* that *they shall not inherit the Kingdom of God*.
And

SERM. And when he enumerates the Sins of *the last times*,
 XLII. Men, says he, 2 Tim. 3. 2, 3. *shall be lovers of themselves, covetous, boasters, evil-speakers, without natural affection, perfidious, false-accusers, &c.* And which is the strangest of all, they who are said to be guilty of these great Vices and Enormities are noted by the *Apostle* to be great pretenders of Religion; for so it follows in the next words, *Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.* So that it is no new thing for men to make a more than ordinary profession of *Christianity*, and yet at the same time to live in a most palpable contradiction to the Precepts of that *Holy Religion*: As if any pretence to *Mystery*, and I know not what extraordinary attainments in the knowledge of *Christ*, could exempt men from obedience to his Laws, and set them above the Virtues of a good Life.

And now after all this, do we hardly think *that* to be a Sin, which is in *Scripture* so frequently rank'd with *Murder* and *Adultery* and the *blackest Crimes*; such as are inconsistent with the life and power of Religion, and will certainly shut men out of the Kingdom of God? Do we believe the *Bible* to be the *Word of God*? and can we allow our selves in the common practice of a Sin, than which there is hardly any Fault of mens Lives more frequently mention'd, more severely reprov'd, and more odiously branded in that *Holy Book*?

Consider seriously these Texts: *Psal. 15. 1. Who shall abide in thy tabernacle, who shall dwell in thy holy hill? He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour. Have ye never heard what our Saviour says, that of every idle word we must give an account in the day of judgment; that by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned?* What can be more severe than that of St. James? *If any man among you seemeth to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, that man's religion is vain.* To conclude: The Sin which I have

have now warned men against, is plainly condemn'd **SERM.**
by the *Word of God*; and the *Duty* which **IXLII.**
have now been persuading you to, is easy for every
man to understand, not hard for any man,
that can but resolve to keep a good guard upon
himself for some time, by the grace of God to practice;
and most reasonable for all *Men*, but especially
for all *Christians*, to observe. It is easy as a *resolute*
silence upon just occasion, as reasonable as *prudence*
and *justice* and *charity*, and the preservation of *peace*
and *good will* among men, can make it; and of a
necessary and indispensable obligation, as the Authority
of God can render any thing.

Upon all which Considerations let every one of us
be persuaded to take up *David's* deliberate Resolution,
Psal. 39. 1. I said, I will take heed to my ways,
that I offend not with my tongue. And I do verily
believe, that would we but heartily endeavour to amend
this one Fault, we should soon be better *Men*
in our whole lives: I mean, that the correcting of
this *Vice*, together with those that are nearly allied
to it, and may at the same time, and almost with the
same resolution and care be corrected, would make
us Owners of a great many considerable *Virtues*, and
carry us on a good way towards perfection; it being
hardly to be imagin'd that a man that makes conscience
of his *Words* should not take an equal or a
greater care of his *Actions*. And this I take to be
both the true meaning, and the true reason of that
saying of *St. James*, and with which I shall conclude:
If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man.

Now the God of Peace, who brought again from the
dead our Lord Jesus Christ, the great Shepherd of
the Sheep, through the Blood of the everlasting
Covenant, make you perfect in every good Word
and Work, to do his will; working in you always
that which is well-pleasing in his sight, through
Jesus Christ; To whom be Glory for ever.
Amen.

SERMON

SERMON XLIII.

Concerning the Divinity and Incarnation of our Blessed Saviour.

Preached in the Church of St. Lawrence-Jewry, December 30. 1679.

JOHN I. 14.

The Word was made flesh and dwelt amongst us; and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.

SERM.
XLIII.

THESE words contain in them three great Points concerning our Blessed Saviour, the Author and Founder of our Faith and Religion.

First, his Incarnation, *The Word was made*, or became *flesh*.

Secondly, His Life and Conversation here among us, *and dwelt amongst us*; ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, he pitched his Tabernacle amongst us; he lived here below in this World, and for a time made his residence and abode with us.

Thirdly, That in this state of his Humiliation he gave great and clear evidence of his Divinity; whilst he appear'd as a *Man* and liv'd amongst us, there were great and glorious Testimonies given of him that he was the *Son of God*; and that in so peculiar a manner as no creature can be said to be: *And we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, &c.*

I shall

I shall begin with the *First* of these, his *Incarnati-* SERM.
on; as most proper for this solemn Time, which XLIII.
 hath for many Ages been set apart for the commemoration of the Nativity and Incarnation of our Blessed Saviour. *The Word was made flesh*, that is, he who is personally called the *Word*, and whom the Evangelist St. *John* had so fully described in the beginning of this *Gospel*, he became flesh, that is, assumed our Nature and became Man; for so the word *flesh* is frequently used in Scripture for *Man* or human nature, Psal. 65. 2. *O thou that bearest prayer, unto thee shall all flesh come*, that is, to thee shall all men address their Supplications: Again, Isa. 40. 5, 6. *The glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together*, that is, all men shall behold and acknowledge it; and then it follows, *all flesh is grass*, speaking of the frailty and mortality of *Man*. And so likewise in the *New Testament*, our Blessed Saviour foretelling the misery that was coming upon the *Jewish Nation*, says, Mat. 24. 22. *Except those days should be shortened no flesh should be saved*, that is, no man should escape and survive that great calamity and destruction which was coming upon them: Gal. 2. 16. *By the works of the Law*, says the *Apostle*, *shall no flesh*, that is, no man be justified.

So that by the *Word's* being *made* or becoming *flesh*, the *Evangelist* did not intend that he assumed only a human Body without a Soul, and was united only to a human Body, which was the Heresy of *Apollinaris* and his Followers, but that he became *Man*, that is, assumed the whole human Nature, Body and Soul. And it is likewise very probable that the *Evangelist* did purposely chuse the word *flesh*, which signifies the frail and mortal part of *Man*, to denote to us that the Son of God did assume our Nature with all its infirmities, and became subject to the common frailty and mortality of human Nature.

The

SERM. The words thus explain'd contain that great Mystery of Godliness, as the *Apostle* calls it, or of the *Christian Religion*: viz. the Incarnation of the Son of God, which *St. Paul* expresseth by the appearance or manifestation of God in the flesh, 1 Tim. 3. 16. *And without controversy great is the mystery of Godliness, God was manifested in the flesh, that is, he appeared in human Nature, he became Man; or as St. John* expresseth it in the Text, *The Word was made flesh.*

But for the more clear and full explication of these words, we will consider these two things.

First, the Person that is here spoken of, and who is said to be Incarnate, or to be *made flesh*, namely *the Word*.

Secondly, The Mystery itself, or the nature of this Incarnation, so far as the Scripture hath revealed and declared it to us.

I. We will consider the Person that is here spoken of, and who is said to be Incarnate or to be *made flesh*, and who is so frequently in this Chapter called by the Name or Title of *the Word*; namely the eternal and only begotten Son of God; for so we find him described in the Text. *The word was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us; and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, &c.* that is, such as became so great and glorious a Person as deserves the Title of *the only begotten Son of God*.

For the explaining of this Name or Title of the *Word* given by *St. John* to our Blessed Saviour, we will consider these two things.

First, The reason of this Name or Title of the *Word*, and what probably might be the Occasion why this *Evangelist* insists so much upon it, and makes so frequent mention of it.

Secondly, The Description itself, which is given of him under this Name or Title of the *Word* by this *Evangelist*, in his entrance into his History of the Gospel.

I. We

I. We will enquire into the Reason of this Name **SERM.**
or Title of the *Word*, which is here given to our **XLIII.**
Blessed Saviour by this *Evangelist*: And what might
probably be the Occasion why he insists so much up-
on it and makes so frequent mention of it. I shall
consider these two things distinctly and severally.

First, the Reason of this Name or Title of the Word,
here given by the Evangelist to our Blessed Saviour.
And he seems to have done it in compliance with the
common way of speaking among the *Jews*, who
frequently call *Messias* by the Name of *the Word of*
the Lord; of which I might give many instances:
But there is one very remarkable, in the *Targum* of
Jonathán, which renders those words of the *Psalmist*,
which the *Jews* acknowledge to be spoken of the
Messias, viz. *The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on*
my right hand, &c. I say it renders them thus, *The*
Lord said unto his Word, sit thou on my right hand,
&c. And so likewise *Philo* the *Jew* calls him by whom
God made the World, the *Word of God*, and the *Son of*
God, And *Plato* probably had the same Notion from
the *Jews*, which made *Amelius* the *Platonist*, when
he read the beginning of *St. John's Gospel*, to say,
this Barbarian agrees with Plato, ranking the Word
in the order of Principles; meaning that he made the
Word the *Principle* or efficient Cause of the World,
as *Plato* also hath done.

And this Title of the *Word* was so famously known
to be given to the *Messias*, that even the Enemies of
Christianity took notice of it. *Julian* the *Apostate*
calls *Christ* by this Name: And *Mahomet* in his *Al-*
coran gives this Name of the *Word* to *Jesus the Son of*
Mary. But *St. John* had probably no reference to
Plato any otherwise than as the *Gnosticks*, against
whom he wrote, made use of several of *Plato's* words
and notions. So that in all probability *St. John* gives
our *Blessed Saviour* this Title with regard to the *Jews*
more especially, who anciently call'd the *Messias* by
this Name.

Secondly,

SERM: Secondly, We will in the next place consider, XLIII. *What might probably be the Occasion why this Evangelist makes so frequent mention of this Title of the Word, and insists so much upon it.* And it seems to be this: Nay, I think that hardly any doubt can be made of it, since the most ancient of the *Fathers*, who lived nearest the time of St. *John*, do confirm it to us.

St. *John*, who survived all the Apostles, liv'd to see those *Heresies* which sprang up in the beginnings of *Christianity*, during the lives of the *Apostles* grown up to a great height, to the great prejudice and disturbance of the *Christian Religion*; I mean the *Heresies* of *Ebion* and *Cerintus*, and the several *Seets* of the *Gnosticks* which began from *Simon Magus*, and were continued and carried on by *Valentinus* and *Basilides*, *Carpocrates* and *Menander*: Some of which expressly deny'd the Divinity of our *Saviour*, asserting him to have been a mere man, and to have had no manner of existence before he was born of the *Blessed Virgin*, as *Eusebius* and *Epiphanius* tell us particularly concerning *Ebion*: Which those who hold the same Opinion now in our days may do well to consider from whence it had its Original.

Others of them, I still mean the *Gnosticks*, had corrupted the simplicity of the *Christian Doctrine* by mingling with it the fancies and conceits of the *Jewish Cabbalists*, and of the *Schools* of *Pythagoras* and *Plato*, and of the *Chaldean Philosophy* more ancient than either; as may be seen in *Eusebius de preparat. Evan.* and by jumbling all these together they had framed a confused *Genealogy* of *Deities*, which they call by several glorious Names, and all of them by the general Name of *Æons* or *Ages*: Among which they reckon'd ζών & λογος & μονογενής & πλήρωμα, that is, the *Life*, and the *Word*, and the *Only begotten*, and the *Fulness*, and many other *Divine Powers* and *Emanations* which they fancied to be successively derived from one another.

And

And they also distinguished between the *Maker of* SERM.
the World whom they called the *God* of the *Old Te-* XLIII.
stament, and the *God* of the *New*: And between *Je-*
sus and *Christ*. *Jesus* according to the Doctrine of
Cerintus, as *Irenæus* tells us, being the Man that
 was born of the Virgin, and *Christ* or the *Messias*
 being that *Divine Power* or *Spirit* which afterwards
 descended into *Jesus* and dwelt in him.

If it were possible, yet it would be to no purpose,
 to go about to reconcile these wild conceits with one
 another; and to find out for what reason they were
 invented, unless it were to amuse the People with
 these *high swelling words of vanity* and a pretence of
knowledge falsely so called, as the *Apostle* speaks in allu-
 sion to the Name of *Gnosticks*, that is to say, *the*
Men of Knowledge, which they proudly assum'd to
 themselves, as if the knowledge of Mysteries of a
 more sublime nature did peculiarly belong to them.

In opposition to all those vain and groundless con-
 ceits, *St. John* in the beginning of his *Gospel* chuses
 to speak of our *Blessed Saviour*, the *History* of whose
 Life and Death he was going to write, by the Name
 or Title of the *Word*, a term very famous among
 those *Seets*: And shews that this *Word of God*, which
 was also the Title the *Jews* anciently gave to the
Messias, did exist before he assumed a human Na-
 ture, and even from all Eternity; And that to this
 eternal *Word* did truly belong all those Titles which
 they kept such a canting stir about, and which they
 did with so much senseless nicety and subtilty di-
 stinguish from one another, as if they had been so
 many several *Emanations* from the *Deity*: And he
 shews that this *Word of God* was really and truly
 the *Life*, and the *Light*, and the *Fulness*, and the
only begotten of the Father; v. 5. *In him was the*
Life, and the Life was the Light of Men; and v.
 6. *And the Light shineth in darkness, and the dark-*
ness comprehended it not: and v. 7, 8, 9. where
 the *Evangelist* speaking of *John the Baptist*, says of
 him, *that he came for a witness, to bear witness of the*

SERM. Light; and that he was not that Light, but was sent
 XLIII. to bear witness of that Light: And that Light was
 the true Light which coming into the World enlightens
 every man: And v. 14. And we beheld his glory, the
 glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of
 grace and truth: And v. 16. And of his fulness we
 all receive, &c. You see here is a perpetual Allusion
 to the glorious Titles which they gave to their *Æons*,
 as if they had been so many several *Deities*.

In short, the *Evangelist* shews that all this fanciful
Genealogy of Divine Emanations, with which the
Gnosticks made so great a noise, was mere conceit and
 imagination; and that all these glorious Titles did
 really meet in the *Messias* who is the *Word*, and who
 before his Incarnation was from all eternity with
God, partaker of his Divine Nature and Glory.

I have declared this the more fully and particu-
 larly, because the knowledge of it seems to me to
 be the only true Key to the Interpretation of this
 Discourse of *St. John* concerning our *Saviour* under
 the Name and Title of the *Word*. And surely it is
 a quite wrong way for any Man to go about by the
 mere strength and subtilty of his Reason and Wit,
 though never so great, to interpret an ancient Book,
 without understanding and considering the Historical
 occasion of it, which is the only thing that can
 give true light to it.

And this was the great and fatal mistake of *Socinus*,
 to go to interpret Scripture merely by criticizing up-
 on words, and searching into all the senses that they
 are possibly capable of, till he can find one, though
 never so forc'd and foreign, that will save harmless
 the Opinion which he was before-hand resolved to
 maintain even against the most natural and obvious
 sense of the Text which he undertakes to interpret:
 Just as if a Man should interpret ancient *Statutes* and
Records by mere Critical skill in words, without re-
 gard to the true Occasion upon which they were
 made, and without any manner of knowledge and
 insight

insight into the History of the Age in which they were written. SERM.
XLIH.

I shall now proceed to the Second thing which I proposed to consider, namely,

II. *The Description here given of the Word by this Evangelist in his entrance into his History of the Gospel.* In the beginning, says he, *was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God: The same was in the beginning with God: All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.*

In which passage of the *Evangelist* four things are said of the *Word* which will require a more particular Explication.

First, That he was in the beginning.

Secondly, That he was in the beginning with God.

Thirdly, That he was God.

Fourthly, That all were made by him.

1st, That he was in the beginning, ἐν ἀρχῇ, which is the same with ἀπ' ἀρχῆς, *from the beginning*, where speaking of *Christ* by the name of *eternal life*, and of the *Word of life*, that, says he, *John* 1. 1. *which was from the beginning.* Nonnus, the ancient *Paraphrast* of *St. John's Gospel*, by way of explication of what is meant by his being *in the beginning*, adds, that he was ἀχρονος, *without time*, that is, before all time; and if so, then he was from all eternity: *In the beginning was the Word*, that is, when things began to be made he was; not then began to be, but then already was, and did exist before any thing was made, and consequently is without beginning, for that which was never made could have no beginning of its Being: and so the *Jews* used to describe *Eternity*, before the *VWorld* was, and before the foundation of the *VWorld*, as also in several places of the *New Testament*. And so likewise *Solomon* describes the Eternity of *VWisdom*, *Prov.* 8. 22, 23, &c. *The Lord*, says he, *possessed me in the beginning of his way, before his works of old: I was set up from everlasting, from the beginning or ever the Earth was: VWhen he*

SERM. prepared the Heaven I was there; then I was with
 XLIII. him as one brought up with him, rejoycing always be-
 fore him: And so Justin Martyr explains this very
 expreffion of St. John, that he was, or had a Being
 before all Ages: So likewise Athenagoras, a most
 ancient Christian Writer, God, says he, who is an
 invisible Mind, had from the beginning the Word in
 himself.

2dly, That in the beginning the Word was with God:
 And so Solomon, when he would exprefs the Eternity
 of Wisdom, says, it was with God: And so likewise
 the Son of Sirach speaking of Wisdom, says, it was
 μετὰ τοῦ θεοῦ with God; And so the ancient Jews often
 called the Word of God, the Word which is before
 the Lord, that is, with him, or in his presence: In
 like manner the Evangelist says here, that the Word
 was with God, that is, it was always together with,
 partaking of his Happiness and Glory: To which
 our Saviour refers in his Prayer, John 17. 5. Glorify
 me with thine own self, with the glory which I had
 with thee before the world was. And this being with
 God the Evangelist opposeth to his appearing and being
 manifested to the World, v. 10. he was in the world,
 and the world was made by him, and the world knew
 him not; that his, he who from all eternity was with
 God, appeared in the World, and when he did so,
 though he had made the World, yet the World
 would not own him. And this opposition between
 his being with God and his being manifested in the
 World, the same St. John mentions elsewhere, 1
 John 1. 2. I shew unto you that eternal life which was
 with the Father, and was manifested unto us.

3dly, That he was God: And so Justin Martyr
 says of him, That he was God before the World, that
 is, from all eternity: But then the Evangelist adds
 by way of Explication, the same was in the beginning
 with God, that is, tho' the Word was truly and real-
 ly God, yet he was not God the Father, who is the
 Fountain of the Deity, but an Emanation from
 him, the only begotten Son of God, from all eterni-
 ty

ty with him; to denote to us, that which is com-
monly called by *Divines*, and for any thing I could
ever see properly enough, *the Distinction of Persons*
in the Deity; at least we know not a fitter word
whereby to express that great Mystery.

4^{thly}, That *all things were made by him*. This
seems to refer to the description which *Moses* makes
of the Creation, where God is represented creating
things by his *Word*; Gen. 1. *God said, let there be
light, and there was light*: And so likewise the *Psal-*
mist, Psal. 33. 6. *By the Word of the Lord were the
heavens made, and all the host of them by the breath of
his mouth*: And so St. *Peter* also expresseth the Crea-
tion of the World, 2 *Pet.* 3. 6. *By the Word of the
Lord the heavens were of old, and the earth made out of
water*: And in the ancient Books of the *Chaldeans*
and the verses ascribed to *Orpheus*, the *Maker of the
World* is called the *Word* and the *Divine Word*: And
so *Tertullian* tells the *Pagans*, that by their *Philoso-*
phers the *Maker of the World* was called λόγος, the
Word, or *Reason*: But *Philo* the *Jew* following
Plato, who himself most probably had it from the
Jews, says, that the World was created by the
Word; whom he calls the *Name of God*, and the *Image
of God*, and the *Son of God*: two of which glorious
Titles are ascribed to him, together with that of
Maker of the World, by the Author of the *Epistle to
the Hebrews*; In these last days, says he, *God hath
spoken to us by his Son, by whom also he made the worlds*:
Who is the brightness of his glory, and the express I-
mage of his person: And to the same purpose St.
Paul, speaking of *Christ*, Colos. 1. 15, 16, 17.
calls him the *Image of the Invisible God*, the *first-born
of every Creature*, that is, born before any thing was
created, as does evidently follow from the Reason
given in the next Words why he call'd him the *first-*
born of every Creature, for by him were all things crea-
ted that are in *Heaven* and in *Earth*, visible and invi-
sible; all things were created by him and for him, and
he is before all things, and by him all things subsist:

SERM. XLIII. From whence it is plain, that by his being *the first-born of every Creature*, thus much at least is to be understood, that he was before all Creatures, and therefore he himself cannot be a Creature, unless he could be before himself: Nay, the *Apostle* says it expressly in this very Text in which he is called the *first-born of every Creature* or of *the whole Creation*, that he is *before all things*, that is, he had a Being before there was any created Being, he was before all Creatures both in Duration and in Dignity; for so must he of necessity be, if *all things were made by him*; for as the Maker is always before the thing which is made, so is he also better and of greater Dignity.

And yet I must acknowledge, that there seems to be no small difficulty in the interpretation I have given of this expression in which *Christ* is said by the *Apostle* to be the *first-born of every Creature*, or of the whole Creation; because in strictness of speech the *first-born* is of the same Nature with those in respect of whom he is said to be the *first-born*: And if so, then he must be a Creature as well as those in respect of whom he is said to be the *first-born*: This is the Objection in its full strength, and I do own it to have a very plausible appearance: And yet I hope before I have done, to satisfy any one that will consider things impartially and without prejudice, and will duly attend to the scope of the *Apostle's* reasoning in this Text, and compare it with other parallel places of the *New Testament*, that it neither is, nor can be the *Apostle's* meaning in affirming *Christ* to be the *first born of every Creature* to insinuate that the *Son of God* is a Creature.

For how can this possibly agree with that which follows, and is given as the Reason why *Christ* is said to be the *first-born of every Creature*? namely, because *all things were made by him*: The *Apostle's* Words are these, *the first-born of every Creature, or of the whole Creation, for by him all things were created*: But now, according to the *Socinian* Interpretation, this would be a Reason just the contrary way: For if *all things*
were

were created by him, then he himself is not a *Creature*. SERM.

So that the *Apostle's* meaning in this expression must **XLIII.**
either be that the *Son of God*, our *Blessed Saviour*,
was before all *Creatures*, as it is said presently after
that *he is before all things*; and then the Reason
which is added will be very proper and pertinent,
he is before all things because *all things were created*
by him: In which sense it is very probable that the
Son of God elsewhere calls himself *the beginning of the*
Creation of God, Rev. 3. 14. meaning by it, as the
Philosophers most frequently use the word ἀρχή, the
Principle or *Efficient Cause* of the *Creation*: And so
we find the same word which our *Translation* renders
the beginning, used together with the word *first born*,
as if they were of the same importance; Col. 1. 18. *the*
beginning and first-born from the dead, that is, the *Prin-*
ciple and Efficient Cause of the *Resurrection of the Dead*.

Or else, which seems to me to be the most proba-
ble, and indeed the true meaning of the Expression,
by this Title of *the first-born of every Creature*, the
Apostle means, that he was *Lord* and *Heir* of the
Creation: For the *first-born* is natural *Heir*, and
Justinian tells us, that *Heir* did anciently signify *Lord*:
And therefore the Scripture uses these terms promi-
scuously, and as if they were equivalent: For whereas
St. *Peter* says of *Jesus Christ*, that *he is Lord of all*,
St. *Paul* calls him *Heir of all things*: Acts 10. 36.
And then the Reason given by the *Apostle* why he
calls him *the first-born of every Creature*, Rom. 4. 14.
will be very fit and proper, because *all things were*
created by him: For well may he be said to be *Lord*
and *Heir* of the *Creation* who *made all things that*
were made, and without whom was not any thing made
that was made.

And this will yet appear much more evident, if
we consider, that the *Apostle* to the *Hebrews*, (who,
by several of the *Ancients*, was thought to be St.
Paul, where he gives to *Christ* some of the very same
Titles which St. *Paul* in his *Epistle* to the *Colossians*
had done, calling him, *the Image of God*, and the

SERM. *Maker of the World*) does instead of the Title of the
 XLIII. *first-born of every Creature*, call him *the Heir of all*
 things; and then adds, as the Reason of this Title,
 that by him God made the Worlds; God, says he,
bath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom
he hath constituted Heir of all things: Who being the
brightness of his glory, and the express Image of his
person, and upholding all things by the word of his pow-
er, &c. Which is exactly parallel with that passage
 of St. Paul to the *Colossians*, where *Christ* is call'd
the Image of the invisible God, and where it is like-
 wise said of him, that *he made all things*, and that *by*
him all things do subsist, which the *Apostle* to the *He-*
brews, in different words, but to the very same sense,
 expresseth by his *upholding all things by the word of his*
Power; that is, by the same *powerful Word* by
 which all things at first were made: But then instead
 of calling him *the first-born of every Creature*, because
all things were made by him, he calls him *the Heir of*
all things, by whom God also made the worlds.

And indeed that expression of *the first-born of eve-*
ry Creature cannot admit of any other sense which
 will agree so well with the Reason that follows as the
 sense which I have mention'd; namely, that he is
 therefore *Heir and Lord of the whole Creation*, because
all Creatures were made by him; which exactly an-
 swers those words of the *Apostle* to the *Hebrews*,
whom he hath constituted Heir of all things, by whom
also he made the Worlds.

And now I appeal to any sober and considerate
 Man, whether the Interpretation which I have gi-
 ven of that expression of *the first-born of every Crea-*
ture, be not much more agreeable both to the tenor
 of the Scripture, and to the plain scope and design
 of the *Apostle's* Argument and Reasoning in that
 Text.

I have insisted the longer upon this, because it is
 the great Text upon which the *Arians* lay the
 main strength and stress of their Opinion that the
 Son of God is a Creature, because he is said by the
Apostle

Apostle to be *the first-born of every Creature*; by which SERM. expression, if no more be meant than that he is *Heir* XLIII. and *Lord* of the whole Creation, which I have shew-
ed to be very agreeable both to the use of the word *first-born* among the *Hebrews*, and likewise to the description given of Christ in that parallel Text which I cited out of the *Epistle* to the *Hebrews*, then this expression of the *first-born of every Creatute* is nothing at all to the purpose either of the *Arians* or the *Socinians*, to prove the Son of God to be a Creature: Besides, that the Interpretation which I have given of it makes the *Apostle's* sense much more current and easy; for then the Text will run thus, *who is the Image of the invisible God, Heir and Lord of the whole Creation, for by him all things were made.*

So that in these *four* expressions of the *Evangelist* which I have explain'd, there are these *four* things distinctly affirmed of the *Word*.

First, That *he was in the beginning*, that is, that he already was and did exist when things began to be created: He was before any thing was made, and consequently is without any beginning of Time; for that which was never made could have no beginning of its Being.

Secondly, That in that state of his existence before the Creation of the World he was partaker of the divine Glory and Happiness: And this I have shew'd to be the meaning of that expression, *and the Word was with God*: For thus our blessed Saviour does explain his being with God before the World was, *And now, O Father, glorify me with thy own self, with the glory which I had with thee before the World was.*

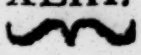
Thirdly, That *he was God*; *And the Word was God*. Not *God the Father*, who is the Principal and Fountain of the Deity: To prevent that mistake, after he had said that *the Word was God*, he immediately adds in the next verse, *the same was in the beginning with God*: He was God by participation of the divine Nature and Happiness together with

SERM. with the *Father*, and by way of derivation
 XLIII. from him as the Light is from the Sun:

Which is the common illustration which the ancient *Fathers* of the *Christian Church* give us of this Mystery, and is perhaps the best and fittest that can be given of it. For among finite Beings it is not to be expected, because not possible, to find any exact resemblance of that which is infinite, and consequently is incomprehensible, because whatever is infinite is for that reason incomprehensible by a finite understanding, which is too short and shallow to measure that which is infinite; and whoever attempts it will soon find himself out of depth.

Fourthly, That *all things were made by him*: Which could not have been more emphatically express'd than it is here by the *Evangelist*, after the manner of the *Hebrews*, who when they would say a thing with the greatest force and certainty, are wont to express it both affirmatively and negatively; as, *He shall live and not die*, that is, he shall most assuredly live; so here, *All things were made by him, and without him was not any thing made that was made*; that is, he made all Creatures without exception, and consequently he himself is not a Creature, because it is evidently impossible that any thing should ever make itself: But then if it be, and yet was never made, it is certainly true, that he always was, even from all Eternity.

All these Assertions are plainly and expressly contain'd in this Description which the *Evangelist St. John* here makes of the Word; and this according to the Interpretation of these Expressions by the unanimous consent of the most ancient *Writers* of the *Christian Church*: who, some of them, had the advantage of receiving it from the immediate Disciples of *St. John*: Which surely is no small prejudice against any newly invented and contrary Interpretation; as I shall hereafter more fully shew, when I come to consider the strange and extravagant Interpretation which the *Socinians* make of this Passage of
 St.

St. John; which is plain enough of itself, if they SERM.
under a pretence of explaining and making it more XLIII.
clear had not disturb'd and darken'd it. 

Now from this description which the *Evangelist*
here gives of the *Word*, and which I have so largely
explain'd in the foregoing Discourse, these *three Co-*
rollaries or Conclusions do necessarily follow.

First, That the *Word* here described by St. John
is not a Creature. This Conclusion is directly against
the *Arians*, who affirm'd that the Son of God, was
a Creature. They grant indeed that he is the first
of all the Creatures both in *Dignity* and *Duration* ;
for so they understand that expression of the *Apostle*
wherein he is called *the first-born of every Creature* :
But this I have endeavour'd already to shew not to
be the meaning of that expression.

They grant him indeed to have been God's *Agent*
or *Instrument* in the Creation of the World, and
that all other Creatures besides himself were made
by him : But still they contend that he is a Creature
and was made : Now this cannot possibly consist
with what St. John says of him, that *he was in the*
beginning, that is, as has been already shewn, before
any thing was made : And likewise, because he is said
to have *made all things, and that without him was not*
any thing made that was made ; and therefore he him-
self who made all things is necessarily excepted out of
the condition or rank of a Creature ; as the *Apostle*
reasons in another Case, *He hath put all things under*
his feet : But *when he saith all things are put under*
him, it is manifest, that he is excepted who did put all
things under him : In like manner, *if by him all things*
were made, and without him was not any thing made that
was made, then either he was not made, or he must
make himself ; which involves in it a plain Contradiction

Secondly, That this *Word* was from all Eternity :
For if *he was in the beginning*, that is, before any
thing was made, he must of necessity always have
been ; because whatever is, must either have been
sometime made, or must always have been ; for
that

SERM. that which was not, and afterwards is, must be
 XLIII. made. And this will likewise follow from his being
 ~~~~~ said to *be God*, and that in the most strict and proper  
 sense, which doth necessarily imply his Eternity, because God cannot begin to be, but must of necessity always have been.

*Thirdly*, From both these it will undeniably follow, that he had an existence before his Incarnation and his being born of the blessed *Virgin*. For if he *was in the beginning*, that is, from all Eternity, which I have shewn to be the meaning of that expression, then certainly he was before his being born of the blessed *Virgin*. And this likewise is implied in the Proposition in the Text, *And the Word was made flesh*, viz. that *Word* which the *Evangelist* had before so gloriously described, that *Word* which *was in the beginning, and was with God, and was God, and by whom all things were made*; I say, that *Word* was incarnate and assumed a human Nature, and therefore must necessarily exist and have a Being before he could assume humanity into an union with his Divinity.

And this Proposition is directly levelled against the *Socinians*, who affirm our blessed *Saviour* to be a mere Man, and that he had no existence before he was born of the *Virgin Mary* his Mother; Which Assertion of theirs doth perfectly contradict all the former Conclusions which have been drawn from the Description here given by St. *John* of the *Word*: And their Interpretation of this passage of St. *John*, applying it to the beginning of the publication of the *Gospel*, and to the new *Creation* or *Reformation* of the World by *Jesus Christ*, doth likewise contradict the Interpretation of this passage constantly received, not only by the ancient *Fathers*, but even by the general consent of all *Christians* for fifteen hundred years together, as I shall hereafter plainly shew: For to establish this their Opinion, that our blessed *Saviour* was a mere Man, and had no existence before his Birth, they are forc'd to interpret this whole passage

page in the beginning of St. *John's* Gospel quite to SERM. another sense, never mention'd, nor, I believe, XLIII. thought of by any *Christian* Writer whatsoever before *Socinus*: And it is not easy to imagine how any Opinion can be loaded with a greater and heavier prejudice than this is.

And this I should now take into consideration, and shew, besides the novelty of this interpretation, and the great violence and unreasonableness of it, the utter inconsistency of it with other plain Texts of the *New Testament*.

But this is wholly matter of Controversy and will require a large Discourse by itself; I shall therefore wave the further prosecution of it at present, and apply my self to that which is more practical and proper for the Occasion of this *Season*: So that at present I have done with the *first* thing contain'd in the *first* part of the Text, *viz.* The *Person* here spoken of who is said to be incarnate, namely, the *Word*, it was *He* that *was made flesh*.

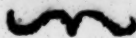
I should then have proceeded to the *Second* thing which I propos'd to consider, *viz.* The *Mystery* it self, or the nature of this *Incarnation* so far as the Scripture hath revealed and declared it to us, namely, by assuming our Nature in such a manner as that the Divinity became united to a human Soul and Body. But this I have already endeavour'd in some measure to explain, and shall do it more fully in some of the following Discourses upon this Text. I shall now only make a short and useful reflection upon it with relation to the *Solemnity* of this *Time*.

And it shall be to stir us up to a thankful acknowledgment of the great love of God to Mankind in the Mystery of our Redemption by the *Incarnation* of the *Word*, the *only begotten Son* of God: That he should deign to have such a regard to us in our low condition, and to take our Case so much to heart as to think of redeeming and saving Mankind from that depth of misery into which we had plunged our selves; and to do this in so wonderful



SERM.

XLIII.



derful and astonishing a manner : That God should employ his eternal and only begotten Son, who had been with him from all eternity, partaker of his Happiness and Glory, and was *God of God*, to save the Sons of Men by so infinite and amazing a condescension : That God should vouchsafe to become Man, to reconcile man to God : That he should come down from heaven to earth, to raise us from earth to heaven : That he should assume our vile and frail and mortal nature, that he might clothe us with glory and honour and immortality : That he should suffer Death to save us from Hell, and shed his Blood to purchase eternal Redemption for us.

For certainly the greater the Person is that was employ'd in this merciful design, so much the greater is the condescension, and the love and goodness expressed in it so much the more admirable : That the Son of God should stoop from the height of Glory and Happiness to the lowest degree of abasement, and to the very depth of misery for our sakes, who were so mean and inconsiderable, so guilty and obnoxious to the severity of his Justice, so altogether unworthy of his Grace and Favour, and so very unwilling to receive it when it was so freely offer'd to us ; for, as the *Evangelist* here tells us, *He came to his own, and his own received him not* : To his own Creatures, and they did not own and acknowledge their Maker ; to his own Nation and Kindred, and they despised him and esteemed him not. Lord ! what is Man that God should be so mindful of him ; or the Son of Man, that the Son of God should come down from Heaven to visit him, in so much humility and condescension, and with so much kindness and compassion.

Blessed God and Saviour of Mankind ! what shall we render to thee for such mighty Love, for such inestimable Benefits as thou hast purchased for us, and art ready to confer upon us ? What shall we say to thee, O thou preserver and lover of Souls, so often as we approach thy *Holy Table*, there to commemorate

memorate this mighty Love of thine to us, and to partake of those invaluable Blessings which by thy precious blood-shedding thou hast obtained for us? So often as we there remember, that thou wast pleased to assume our mortal Nature, on purpose to live amongst us for our Instruction, and for our Example, and to lay down thy life for the Redemption of our Souls and for the Expiation of our Sins; and to *take part of flesh and blood* that thou mightest shed it for our sakes: What affections should these thoughts raise in us? What vows and resolutions should they engage us in, of perpetual love and gratitude, and obedience to thee the most gracious and most glorious Redeemer of Mankind?

And with what religious Solemnity should we more especially at this time, celebrate the *Incarnation* and Birth of the Son of God, by giving praise and glory to God in the highest, and by all possible demonstration of charity and *good will to men*? And as he was pleased to assume our Nature, so should we, especially at this season, *put on the Lord Jesus Christ*, that is, sincerely embrace and practise his Religion, *making no provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof*: And now that the *Sun of Righteousness* is risen upon the World, we should *walk as children of the light, and demean our selves decently as in the day, not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering and wantonness, not in strife and envy*: And should be very careful not to abuse our selves by Sin and Sensuality, upon this very consideration that the Son hath put such an honour and dignity upon us: We should reverence that Nature which God did not disdain to assume and to inhabit here on Earth, and in which he now gloriously reigns in Heaven, at the right hand of his *Father*; *to him be glory for ever and ever, Amen.*

SERMON

## S E R M O N XLIV.

Concerning the Divinity of our Blessed Saviour.

*Preached in the Church of St. Lawrence-Jewry, January 6. 1679.*

JOHN i. 14.

*The Word was made flesh.*

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XLIV.

**I** Proceed now to prosecute the *third Corollary* or Conclusion, which does necessarily follow from the Description which St *John* in the beginning of his *Gospel* gives of the *Word*, and which I have so largely explain'd in the foregoing Discourse: And it was this,

That the *Word*, here described by the *Evangelist*, had an existence before his Incarnation and his being born of the blessed Virgin.

This *Affertion*, I told you, is levelled directly against the *Socinians*, who affirm our blessed Saviour to be a mere Man, and deny that he had any existence before he was born of the Virgin *Mary* his Mother: Which *Position* of theirs does perfectly contradict all the former *Conclusions* which have been so evidently drawn from the Description here given of the *Word*: And not only so, but hath forced them to interpret this whole passage in the beginning of St. *John's Gospel* in a very different sense from that which was constantly received, not only by the ancient *Fathers*, but by the general consent of all *Christians* 1500 years together: For to establish this their Opinion of our Saviour's being a mere Man, and having no existence before his Birth, they have found

it



it necessary to expound this whole passage quite to a-<sup>SERM.</sup>  
 nother Sense, and such as by their own confession <sup>XLIV.</sup>  
 was never mentioned, nor, I believe, thought  
 of by any *Christian* Writer whatsoever before *Socinus*.

For this Reason I shall very particularly consider the Interpretation which *Socinus* gives of this Passage of *St. John*; and besides the novelty of it, which they themselves acknowledge, I make no doubt very plainly to manifest the great Violence and Unreasonableness, and likewise the Inconsistency of it with other plain *Texts* of the *New Testament*.

It is very evident what it was that forc'd *Socinus* to so strain'd and violent an Interpretation of this Passage of the Evangelist, namely, that he plainly saw how much the obvious, and natural, and generally receiv'd Interpretation of this Passage, in all Ages of the *Christian* Church down to his time, stood in the way of his *Opinion*, of *Christ's* being a mere Man, which he was so fond of, and must of necessity have quitted, unless he would either have denied the Divine Authority of *St. John's Gospel*, or else could supplant the common Interpretation of this Passage by putting a quite different sense upon it: Which Sense he could find no way to support without such pitiful and wretched shifts, such precarious and arbitrary Suppositions, as a Man of so sharp a Reason and Judgment as *Socinus*, could not, I thought, have ever been driven to. But necessity hath no Laws either of Reason or Modesty, and he who is resolved to maintain an Opinion which he hath once taken up, must stick at nothing, but must break through all difficulties that stand in his way: And so the *Socinians* have here done, as will, I hope, manifestly appear in the following Discourse.

They grant that by the *Word* is here meant *Christ*, by whom God spake and declared his Mind and Will to the World; which they make to be the whole Reason of that Name or Title of the *Word*

SERM. which is here given him, and not because by Him  
 XLIV. God made the World : For the *Word* by which God  
 made the World, they tell us, was nothing but the  
 powerful Command of God, and not a Person who  
 was design'd to be the *Messias*. And because, as I  
 have shewed before, the ancient *Jews* do make fre-  
 quent mention of this Title of the *Word of God* by  
 whom they say *God made the World*, and do like-  
 wise apply this Title to the *Messias* ; therefore to a-  
 void this, *Schlictingius* says, that the *Chaldee Para-*  
*phrasts*, *Jonathan* and *Onkelos*, do sometimes put the  
*Word of God* for *God*, by a *Metonymy* of the Effect  
 for the Cause ; but then he confidently denies that  
 they do any where distinguish the *Word* of God  
 from the *Person* of God, as they acknowledge that  
*St. John* here does ; nor do they, says he, under-  
 stand by the *Word of God* the *Messias*, but on the  
 contrary, do oppose the *Word of God* to the *Messias* :  
 All which is most evidently confuted by that passage  
 which I cited before out of the *Targum* of *Jonathan*  
 who renders those words concerning the *Messias*, *The*  
*Lord said unto my Lord*, &c. thus, *The Lord said*  
*unto his Word, sit thou on my right hand*, &c. where  
 you see both that the *Word of God* is plainly distin-  
 guished from *God*, and that it is the Title given to  
 the *Messias* ; which are the two things which *Schlic-*  
*tingius* doth so confidently deny.

This then being agreed on all hands, that by the  
*Word*, *St. John* means the *Messias*, I shall in the next  
 place, shew by what strained and forced arts of In-  
 terpretation the *Socinians* endeavour to avoid the plain  
 and necessary consequence from this Passage of *St.*  
*John*, namely, that the *Word* had an Existence be-  
 fore he was *made flesh* and born of the *Blessed Virgin*  
 his mother.

This then, in short, is the Interpretation which they  
 give of this Passage, than which I think nothing can  
 be more unnatural and violent.

*In the beginning* ; This they will by no means have  
 to refer to the *Creation* of the World, but to the  
 begin-

beginning of the *Gospel*; that is, when the *Gospel* SERM.  
first began to be published; then was *Christ*, and XLIV.  
not before: *And he was with God*, that is, says *Soci-*  
*nus*, *Christ* as he was the *Word of God*, that is, the *Gos-*  
*pel of Christ* which was afterwards by him revealed  
to the World, was first only known to God:  
But all this being somewhat hard, first to understand  
by *the beginning* not the *beginning* of the *World* but of  
the *Gospel*; and then by the *Word* which *was with*  
*God* to understand the *Gospel* which before it was re-  
vealed was only known to God; they have upon se-  
cond thoughts found out another meaning of those  
words; *And the word was with God*, that is, saith  
*Schlietzingius*, *Christ* was taken up by God into Hea-  
ven, and there instructed in the Mind and Will of  
God, and from thence sent down into the World a-  
gain to declare it to Mankind.

*And the Word was God*; that is, say they, *Christ*  
had the Honour and Title of God conferr'd upon  
him, as *Magistrates* also have, who in the *Scripture*  
are called Gods: *He was God*, not by *Nature* but  
by *Office* and by Divine constitution and appoint-  
ment.

*All things were made by him*: This they will needs  
have to be meant of the *Renovation* and *Reformation*  
of the World by *Jesus Christ*, which is several times  
in *Scripture* call'd a *new Creation*.

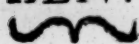
This, in short, is the Sum of their Interpretation  
of this Passage, which, I shall now examine, and to  
which I shall oppose *three* things as so many invincible  
prejudices against it.

*First*, That not only all the ancient *Fathers* of the  
*Christian Church*, but so far as I can find, all *Inter-*  
*preters* whatsoever for *fifteen hundred years* together  
did understand this Passage of *St. John* in a quite  
different sense, namely, of the *Creation* of the *ma-*  
*terial*, and not the *Renovation* of the *moral World*:  
And I add further, that the generality of *Christians*  
did so understand this Passage, as to collect from it as  
an undoubted *Point* of *Christianity*, that the *Word*

against  
Soci-  
nus  
ancient  
Interpreters



SERM: had a real existence before he was born of the *Blessed*  
 XLIV. *Virgin*.



And thus not only the *Orthodox Christians*, but even the *Arians*, and *Amelius* the *Platonist* who was a more indifferent judge than either of them, did understand this Passage of *St. John*, without any thought of this Invention that he spake not of the *old*, but of the *new Creation* of the World by *Jesus Christ*, and the Reformation of Mankind by the preaching of the *Gospel*: Which I dare say no indifferent Reader of *St. John*, that had not been prepossess'd and bias'd by some violent prejudice, would ever have thought of.

And surely it ought to be very considerable in this Case, that the most ancient *Christian Writers*, *Ignatius*, *Justin Martyr*, *Athenagoras*, *Irenæus*, *Tertullian*, and even *Origen* himself who is called *the Father of Interpreters*, are most express and positive in this matter. For *Ignatius* was the Scholar of *Polycarp*, who was a Disciple of *St. John*; and *Justin Martyr* lived in the next Age to that of the *Apostles*; and *Origen* was a Man of infinite Learning and Reading, and in his *Comments* upon *Scripture* seems to have considered all the *Interpretations* of those that were before him: So that if this, which *Socinus* is so confident is the true Sense of *St. John*, had been any where extant, he would not probably have omitted it; nay rather would certainly have mentioned it, if for no other reason, yet for the surprising novelty and strangeness of it, with which he was apt to be over-much delighted.

So that if this Interpretation of *Socinus* be true, here are two things very wonderful and almost incredible: *First*, that those who lived so very near *St. John's* Time, and were most likely to know his meaning, as *Ignatius*, *Justin Martyr*, &c. should so widely mistake it: And then, that the whole *Christian World* should for so many Ages together be deceived in the ground and foundation of so important

tant an *Article* of Faith, if it were true ; or if it were not, should be led into so gross and dangerous an Error as this must needs be, if *Christ* had no real existence before he was born in the World : And which would be necessarily consequent upon this, that no man did understand this Passage of *St. John* aright before *Socinus*. This very consideration alone, if there were no other, were sufficient to stagger any prudent Man's belief of this Interpretation.

And as to the *Novelty* of it, *Socinus* himself makes no difficulty to own it ; nay he seems rather to rejoice and to applaud himself in it. Unhappy Man ! that was so wedded to his own Opinion that no Objection, no Difficulty could divorce him from it.

And for this I refer myself to his *Preface* to his Explication of this first *Chapter* of *St. John's Gospel* ; where you shall find these words concerning the Passage now in Controversy, *Quorum verus sensus omnium prorsus qui quidem extarent, explanatores latuisse videtur ; The true sense of which words, says he, seems to have been hid from all the Expositors that ever were extant : And upon these words, v. 10. He was in the World, and the World was made by him, he hath this expression, quid autem hoc loco sibi velit Johannes, à nemine quod sciam adhuc rectè expositum fuit ; but what St. John means in this place was never yet, that I know of, by any man rightly explain'd : And Schlietinius after him, with more confidence but much less decency, tells us, that concerning the meaning of those expressions, in the beginning, and of those which follow concerning the Word, the ancient Interpreters did ab Apostoli mente delirare, went so far from the Apostle's meaning as if they had rav'd and been out of their wits : Which is so extravagantly said, and with so much contempt of those great and venerable Names, who were the chief Propagators of Christianity in the World, and to whom all Ages do so justly pay a Reverence, that nothing can be said in excuse of him, but only that it is not usual with him to fall into such rash and rude expressions.*

SERM. But the Man was really pinch'd by so plain and pressing a *Text*, and where Reason is weak and blunt, Passion must be whetted, the only weapon that is left when Reason fails: And I always take it for granted, that no Man is ever angry with his Adversary but for want of a better Argument to support his Cause.

And yet to do right to the Writers on that side, I must own, that generally they are a Pattern of the fair way of disputing, and of debating matters of Religion without heat and unseemly reflections upon their Adversaries, in the number of whom I did not expect that the Primitive *Fathers* of the *Christian* Church would have been reckoned by them. They generally argue matters with that temper and gravity, and with that freedom from passion and transport which becomes a serious and weighty Argument: And for the most part they reason closely and clearly, with extraordinary guard and caution, with great dexterity and decency, and yet with smartness and subtilty enough; with a very gentle heat, and few hard words: Virtues to be praised where ever they are found, yea even in an Enemy, and very worthy our imitation: In a word, they are the strongest managers of a weak Cause and which is ill founded at the bottom, that perhaps ever yet meddled with Controversy: Insomuch that some of the *Protestants* and the generality of the *Popish* Writers, and even of the *Jesuits* themselves, who pretend to all the Reason and Subtilty in the World, are in comparison of *them* but mere *Scolds* and *Bunglers*: Upon the whole matter, they have but this one great defect, that they want a good Cause and Truth on their Side; which if they had, they have Reason, and Wit, and Temper enough to defend it.

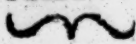
But to return to the business. That which I urge them withal, and that from their own Confession, is this, that this Interpretation of theirs is perfectly new, and unknown to the whole *Christian* World before *Socinus*; and for that Reason, in my Opinion, not to be bragg'd of: Because it is in effect to say  
that



that the *Christian* Religion, in a point pretended on SERM. both Sides to be of the greatest moment, was never XLIV. rightly understood by any since the *Apostles* days, for *fifteen hundred* years together : And which makes the matter yet worse, that the *Religion* which was particularly design'd to overthrow *Polytheism* and the belief of more Gods, hath, according to *them*, been so ill taught and understood by *Christians* for so many Ages together and almost from the very beginning of *Christianity*, as does necessarily infer a plurality of Gods : An inconvenience so great, as no Cause, how plausible soever it may otherwise appear, is able to stand under and to sustain the weight of it.

For this the *Socinians* object to us at every turn, as the unavoidable consequence of our Interpretation of this Passage of *St. John*, and of all other *Texts* of *Scripture* produced by us to the same purpose, notwithstanding that this Interpretation hath obtain'd in the *Christian* Church for so many Ages : Now whosoever can believe that the *Christian* Religion hath done the Work for which it was principally design'd so ineffectually, must have very little reverence for it, nay, it must be a marvellous civility in him if he believe it at all. All that can be said in this Case is, that it pleases God many times to permit Men to hold very inconsistent things, and which do in truth, tho' they themselves discern it not, most effectually overthrow one another.

*Secondly*, Another mighty prejudice against this Interpretation is this, that according to this rate of liberty in interpreting *Scripture*, it will signify very little or nothing, when any Person or Party is concern'd to oppose any Doctrine contained in it ; and the plainest *Texts* for any *Article* of Faith, how fundamental and necessary soever, may by the same arts and ways of Interpretation be eluded and render'd utterly ineffectual for the establishing of it : For example. If any man had a mind to call in question that *Article* of the *Creed* concerning the *Creation of the World*, why might he not, according to *Socinus*

SERM. his way of interpreting St. *John*, understand the *first*  
 XLIV. Chapter of *Genesis* concerning the *beginning* of the  
 *Mosaical* Dispensation, and interpret the *Creation of*  
*the Heaven and the Earth* to be the Institution of the  
*Jewish* Polity and Religion, as by the *new Heavens*  
 and the *new Earth* they pretend is to be understood  
 the new State of things under the *Gospel*? And why  
 may not the *Chaos* signify that state of Darkness and  
 Ignorance in which the World was before the giving  
 of the Law by *Moses*? And so on; as a very learn-  
 ed *Divine* of our own hath ingeniously shewn more at  
 large.

Dr. Stil-  
 lingfleet,  
 late Bi-  
 shop of  
 Worcester.

There is no end of Wit and Fancy, which can turn any thing any way, and can make whatever they please to be the meaning of any *Book*, though never so contrary to the plain design of it, and to that sense which at the first hearing and reading of it is obvious to every Man of common sense.

And this, in my Opinion, *Socinus* hath done in the Case now before us, by imposing a new and odd and violent sense upon this Passage of St. *John*, directly contrary to what any Man would imagine to be the plain and obvious meaning of it, and contrary likewise to the sense of the *Christian* Church in all Ages down to his Time; who yet had as great or greater advantages of understanding St. *John* aright, and as much Integrity as any man can now modestly pretend to: And all this only to serve and support an *Opinion* which he had entertain'd before, and therefore was resolv'd one way or other to bring the *Scripture* to comply with it: And if he could not have done it, it is greatly to be feared that he would at last have called in question the Divine Authority of St. *John's* Gospel rather than have quitted his *Opinion*.

And to speak freely, I must needs say that it seems to me a much fairer way to reject the Divine Authority of a *Book*, than to use it so disingenuously, and to wrest the plain expressions of it with so much straining and violence from their most natural and  
 obvious

obvious sense : For no Doctrine whatsoever can have SERM.  
any certain foundation in any *Book* if this liberty be XLIV.  
once admitted, without regard to the plain Scope  
and Occasion of it, to play upon the words and  
phrases with all the arts of *Criticism*, and with all  
the variety of *Allegory*, which a brisk and lively  
Imagination can devise: which I am so far from  
admiring in the expounding of the *Holy Scriptures*,  
that I am always jealous of an over-labour'd and  
far-fetch'd Interpretation of any *Author* whatsoever.

I do readily grant, that the *Socinian* Writers have  
managed the Cause of the *Reformation* against the  
Innovations and Corruptions of the Church of *Rome*  
both in Doctrine and Practice, with great acuteness  
and advantage in many respects : But I am sorry to  
have cause to say, that they have likewise put into  
their hands better and sharper weapons than ever  
they had before for the weakning and undermining  
of the Authority of the *Holy Scriptures*, which *Soci-*  
*nus* indeed hath in the general strongly asserted,  
had he not by a dangerous liberty of imposing a  
foreign and forc'd sense upon *particular* Texts  
brought the *whole* into uncertainty.

*Thirdly*, Which is as considerable a prejudice a-  
gainst this new Interpretation of this Passage of *St.*  
*John* as either of the former, I shall endeavour to  
shew, that this *Point*, of the existence of the *Word*  
before his *Incarnation*, does not only rely upon this  
single *Passage* of *St. John*, but is likewise confirmed  
by many other *Texts* of the *New Testament* conspiring  
in the same sense and utterly incapable of the Inter-  
pretation which *Socinus* gives of it.

I find he would be glad to have it taken for grant-  
ed that this is the only *Text* in the *New Testament* to  
this purpose : And therefore he says very cunningly,  
that this Doctrine of the existence of the Son of  
God before his *Incarnation* is too great a Doctrine  
to be establish'd upon one single *Text* : And this is  
something, if it were true, that there is no other  
*Text* in the *New Testament* that does plainly deliver  
the

*The conspiring  
among  
other Texts  
to establish*



SERM. the same sense : And yet this were not sufficient to  
 XLIV. bring in question the Doctrine deliver'd in this *Pas-*  
 sage of St. *John*.

That *God is a Spirit* will I hope be acknowledged to be a very weighty and fundamental Point of Religion, and yet I am very much mistaken if there be any more than one *Text* in the whole *Bible* that says so, and that *Text* is only in St. *John's* Gospel. I know it may be said, that from the light of natural Reason it may be sufficiently prov'd that God is a Spirit : But surely *Socinus* of all Men, cannot say this with a good grace ; because he denies that the existence of a God can be known by natural light without Divine Revelation : And if it cannot be known by natural light that there is a God, much less can it be known by natural light what God is, whether a Spirit or a Body.

And yet after all it is very far from being true that there is but one *Text* to this purpose ; which yet he thought fit to insinuate by way of excuse for the novelty and boldness of his Interpretation ; of which any one that reads him may see that he was sufficiently conscious to himself, and therefore was so wise as to endeavour by this sly insinuation to provide and lay in against it. I have likewise another Reason which very much inclines me to believe that *Socinus* was the first Author of this Interpretation, because it seems to me next to impossible, that a Man, of so good an Understanding as he was, could have ever been so fond of so ill-favour'd a Child if it had not been his own. And yet I do not at all wonder that his Followers came into it so readily, since they had him in so great a veneration, it being natural to all *Seets* to admire their *Master* ; besides that, I doubt not but they were very glad to have so great an Authority as they thought him to be, to vouch for an Interpretation which was so seasonably devis'd for the relief of their Cause, in so much danger to be overthrown by a *Text* that was so plain and full against them.

And how little ground there is for this Insinuation, that this is the only *Text* in the *New Testament*

ment to this purpose, I shall now shew from a multitude of other *Texts* to the same sense and purpose with this *Passage* of *St. John*. And I shall rank them under *two Heads*. SERM. XLIV.

*First*, Those which expressly assert the Son of God to have been, and to have been in Heaven with God, and partaker with him in his Glory, before his *Incarnation* and appearance in the World.

*Secondly*, Those which affirm that the World and all Creatures whatsoever were made by him.

I. Those *Texts* which expressly assert the Son of God to have been, and to have been in Heaven with God, and partaker with him in his Glory, before his *Incarnation* and appearance in the world.

No Man hath ascended into Heaven, but he that came down from Heaven, the Son of Man who is in Heaven: John 3. 13. Where the Son is said to have come down from Heaven, in respect of the Union of his Divinity with human Nature and his special residence in it here below: And yet he is said to have come down from Heaven, as still to be in Heaven; He that came down from Heaven, the Son of Man who is in Heaven that is, in respect of his Divinity by which he is every where present: And he that came down from Heaven is here called the Son of Man by the same Figure that his Blood is elsewhere called the Blood of God, Acts 20. 28. the *Apostle* ascribing that to one Nature which is proper to the other: this we take to be the most natural and easy sense of this *Text*, and most agreeable to the tenor of the *New Testament*.

Again, What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where he was before? John 6. 62. So that if he really ascended up into Heaven after his Resurrection, he was really there before his *Incarnation*.

Before Abraham was, says our Blessed Saviour, I am; John 8. 58. the obvious sense of which words is, that he had a real existence before Abraham was actually in Being.

Again it is said, John 13. 3. that Jesus knowing that the Father had given all things into his hands, and that he was come from God, and went to God, &c.

And

SERM. And again, *John 16. 27, 28. For the Father himself loveth you, because ye loved me, and have believed that I came out from God. I came forth from the Father, and am come into the world: Again, I leave the world, and go to the Father:* This was so very plain, that his *Disciples* who were slow enough of apprehension in other things, did understand this so well, that upon this declaration of his they were convinc'd of his *Omniscience*, which is an *incommunicable Property* of the *Divinity*: For so it immediately follows, *v. 29, 30. His Disciples said unto him, Lord, now speakest thou plainly and speakest no parable: Now are we sure that thou knowest all things, and needest not that any man should ask thee: By this we believe that thou camest forth from God.* So that either this which I have all along declar'd must be the meaning of our *Saviour's* words, or else his *Disciples* were grossly mistaken and did not understand him at all: And if so, then surely our *Saviour* before he had proceeded any further would have corrected their mistake, and have set them right in this matter: But so far is he from doing that, that he allows them to have understood him aright: For thus it follows, *Jesus answered them, Do ye now believe?* as if he had said, I am glad that you are at last convinc'd and do believe that *I came from God*, *ver. 31.* and must *return to him*; and that *I know all things*, which none but God can do. Is it now possible for any Man to read this *Passage*, and yet not to be convinced that the *Disciples* understood our *Saviour* to speak literally? But if his meaning was as the *Socinians* would make us believe, then the *Disciples* did perfectly mistake his words; the contrary whereof is I think very plain and evident beyond all contradiction.

Again, *John 17. 5. And now, O Father glorify me with thine own self, with the glory which I had with thee, before the world was:* This surely is not spoken of his *being with God* after his *Incarnation*, and before his entrance upon his publick *Ministry*: They have not, I think, the face to understand this expression,



expression, *before the world was*, of the new Creati-  
on, but do endeavour to avoid it another way, **SERM. XLIV.**  
which I shall consider by and by.

And a little after, *ver. 8. I have given them the words which thou gavest me, and they have received them, and known assuredly that I came from thee, and that thou didst send me.*

Again, *1 John 1. 1, 2. That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life: for the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, for so he calls the Son of God, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us.*

And that he was not only *with God* before he assumed human Nature, but also was really God, St. Paul tells us, *Phil. 2. 5, 6, 7, 8. Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who being in the form of God, οὐκ ἄρπαγμαὺν ἑγήσατο, did not arrogate to himself to be equal with God, that is, he made no ostentation of his Divinity: For this I take to be the true meaning of that Phrase, both because it is so used by Plutarch, and because it makes the sense much more easy and current, thus, who being in the form of God, did not assume an equality with God, that is, he did not appear in the Glory of his Divinity, which was hid under a Veil of human flesh and infirmity; But he emptied himself, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men, and being found in fashion as a man, or in the habit of a Man, he became obedient to the death, &c. So that if his being made in the likeness and fashion of a man does signify that he was really Man by his Incarnation, then surely his being in the form of God when he took upon him the fashion and likeness of Man and the form of a Servant or Slave, must in all reason signify that he was really God before he became Man: For which reason the same Apostle did not doubt to say, that God was manifested in the flesh, 1 Tim. 3. 16.*

And

SERM. And now I hope that I have made it fully appear,  
 XLIV. that the beginning of St. *John's* Gospel is not the  
 single and only *Text* upon which we ground this  
 great *Doctrine* as *Socinus* calls it, and as we really  
 esteem it to be: For you see that I have produced a  
 great many more; to avoid the dint and force where-  
 of the *Socinians* do chiefly make use of these *two* An-  
 swers.

*First*, To those *Texts* which say that *he was in Heaven* and *came down from Heaven*, they give this answer; That our *Saviour* some time before his entrance upon his publick Ministry, they cannot agree precisely *when*, was taken up into Heaven, and then and there had the Will of God reveal'd to him, and was sent down from Heaven again to make it known to the World.

This is so very arbitrary and precarious a Supposition, that I must confess myself not a little out of countenance for them, that Men of so much Wit and Reason should ever be put to so sorry and pitiful a shift. For can any Man imagine, that in so exact a History of our *Saviour's* Life, written by several Persons, the Relation of so important a matter as this, and of the Circumstances of it, should be wholly omitted? That we should have a particular account of his being carried into *Egypt* in his infancy, and of the time when he was brought back from thence: Of his disputing in the Temple with the *Jewish* Doctors, and putting them to silence when he was but twelve years of Age: A punctual Relation of his being baptized by *John*; and how after that *he was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the Devil*, and was carried by that *evil Spirit* from one place to another: But not one word of his being taken up by God into Heaven, and of his coming down again from thence; not the least intimation given either of the time or any other circumstance of so memorable a thing, upon which, according to the *Socinians*, the Authority of his Mission and the Divinity of his *Doctrine* did so much depend:

depend : When so many things of so much less moment, are so minutely and exactly reported, what can be the reason of this deep silence in all the *Evangelists* concerning this matter ? But above all, it is to be wondred that St. *John*, who wrote this *Gospel* last, and as *Eusebius* tells us on purpose to supply the omissions of the other *Evangelists*, should give no account of this thing, and yet, as the *Socinians* suppose, should so often take it for granted and refer to it ; as when it is said that *he came forth from God*, and was *sent from God*, and *came down from Heaven*, besides several other Expressions to this purpose.

Who can believe this ? And can it then be reasonable to suppose such a thing ? And this without any ground from the History of the *Gospel*, only to serve an *Hypothesis* which they had taken up, and which they cannot maintain, unless they may have leave to make a Supposition for which they have nothing in truth to say, but only that it is necessary to defend an Opinion which they are resolv'd not to part with upon any terms.

This is so inartificial, not to say absurd a way of avoiding a difficulty, to take for granted whatever is necessary to that purpose, that no man of common ingenuity would make use of it : And there is no surer sign that a Cause is greatly distress'd than to be driven to such a shift. For do but give a Man leave to suppose what he pleases and he may prove what he will, and avoid any difficulty whatever that can be objected to him.

Besides, that according to this device the Son of God did not first come from Heaven into the World, as the *Scripture* seems every where to say, but first was in the World, and then went to Heaven, and from thence came back into the World again : And he was not *in the beginning with God*, but was first in the World and afterwards with God ; whereas St. *John* says, that the *Word was in the beginning*, and then *was made flesh and dwelt among us* : But they say, that he first *was made flesh*, and then a great while after



SERM. after was *in the beginning with God* : A supposition  
 XLIV. which is quite contrary to all the *Texts* which I have  
 mentioned.

Nor do the several parts of this Interpretation of theirs agree very well together. *In the beginning*, that is, say they, when the *Gospel* first began to be publish'd, *was the Word* ; and then, that is, *in the beginning*, *he was with God*, that is, in Heaven to receive from God that Doctrine which he was to deliver to the World : But if by *the beginning* be meant the first publication of the *Gospel*, he was not *then* with God, but had been with him and was come back from him before he entered upon his publick Ministry, which they make to be the meaning of *the beginning* : And *in the beginning he was God*, that is, say they, not God by Nature but by Office and divine Constitution : And yet in this again they fall foul upon themselves, for they say he was not declared to be God till after his Resurrection and his being advanced to the right hand of God : So that he was not God in their Sense of *the beginning*, that is, when he entred upon his publick Ministry and began to preach the *Gospel*.

Secondly, As to some other *Texts* which speak of his existence before his Incarnation, as that he was *glorified with his-Father before the World was*, and *before Abraham was, I am* : These they interpret thus, that *he was glorified with his Father before the World was*, and that he was *before Abraham was*, viz. in the Divine Foreknowledge and Decree : But then surely they do not consider that this is nothing but what might have been said of any other Man and even of *Abraham* himself, that *before he was*, that is, before he had a real and actual existence, he was in the Purpose and Decree of God, that is, before he was, God did intend he should be : Which is a Sense so very flat, that I can hardly abstain from saying it is ridiculous. For certainly our *Saviour* did intend by saying this of himself to give himself some preference and advantage above *Abraham*, which

which this Sense and Interpretation does not in the SERM. least do: Because of any other Man, as well as of XLIV. our blessed Saviour, it may as truly be said, that he was in the Foreknowledge and Decree of God before *Abraham* was born.

And I cannot but observe further, that our Saviour does not say, before *Abraham* was, I was; but before *Abraham* was, *I am*. Which is the proper Name of God, whereby is signified the eternal duration and permanency of his Being: In which Sense he is said by the *Apostle* to the *Hebrews*, to be *the same yesterday, and to day, and for ever*, Heb. 13. 8. And so likewise he describes himself in *St. John's* Visions, Rev. 1. 8. *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty*: And that this is spoken of the Son you may see in the same Chapter, where he says of himself, v. 17. *I am the first and the last*: And so likewise he describes himself again, Rev. 22. 13. *I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last*: And that we may not doubt who it is that thus describes his own *Eternity*, he continuing still to speak in the same Person, says, v. 16. *I Jesus have sent my Angel, &c.* After this I shall only observe, that all these Expressions are the common Description which the Scripture gives of the Eternity of God, whose Being is commensurate to all the several respects of *Duration, past, present, and to come*: Besides that the Attribute of *Almighty* is also a part of this Description, which is so peculiar a Property of God, I mean of *Him* who is *God by Nature*, that the Scripture never gives it to any other.

II. I shall in the next place produce those Texts which do expressly affirm *that the world and all creatures whatsoever were made by him*: And this will not only infer his Existence before his Incarnation, but from all Eternity.

And for this, besides this Passage of *St. John*, we have the *Apostle* to the *Hebrews* most express, who

SERM. says, that *by him God made the Worlds*: Heb. i. 2.

XLIV. And St. Paul likewise says the same more fully and particularly, *Coloss. i. 15, 16. calling Jesus Christ, who was the son of God the first-born of every creature, that is, as I have shewn in my former Discourse, the Heir and Lord of the whole Creation: For by him, says he, were all things created, that are in heaven and that are in earth, visible and invisible; Whether they be thrones or dominions, principalities or powers, for so he calls the several Orders of Angels, all things were created by him and for him, and he is before all things: Or, as he is describ'd in Saint John's Vision, he is the beginning of the Creation of God, that is, the Principle and efficient Cause of the Creation; or else, he was when all things began to be made, and therefore must be before any thing was created, and for that reason could not be a Creature himself, and consequently, must of necessity have been from all Eternity.*

Now these *Texts* must necessarily be understood of the *old Creation*, and of the *natural World*, and not of the *moral World*, and the *Renovation* and *Reformation* of the *Minds* and *Manners* of *Men* by the *Gospel*: For *that* was only the *World* here below which was reform'd by him, and not *things in Heaven*; not the *invisible World*, not the several *Orders* of good *Angels*, which kept their *first Station*, and have no need to be reform'd and made anew: Nor the *Devil* and *his evil Angels*; for tho' since the preaching of the *Gospel* they have been under greater restraint and kept more within bounds, yet we have no reason to think that they are at all reform'd but are *Devils* still, and have the same malice and mind to do all the mischief to Mankind that God will suffer them to do.

So that these *Texts* seem, at first view, to be very plain and pressing of themselves, but they appear to be much more convincing when we consider the groundless Interpretations whereby they endeavour  
to

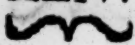


to evade the dint and force of them. For can any SERM.  
 Man that seriously attends to the perpetual Style and XLIV.  
 Phrase of the *New Testament*, and to the plain scope  
 and drift of the *Apostle's* reasoning in these *Texts*, be  
 induc'd to believe that when St. Paul tells us, that  
*all things were created by him, that are in heaven and*  
*that are in earth, visible and invisible; whether they be*  
*thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers:*  
 I say, can any Man of good Sense persuade himself  
 that by all this the *Apostle* means no more than the  
*moral Renovation of the World here below*, and the  
 Reformation of Mankind by *Jesus Christ*, and his  
*Gospel* which was preach'd unto them?

But there is yet one *Text* more to this purpose,  
 which I have reserv'd to the last place; because I  
 find *Schlinſtingius* and *Crellius*, in their joint *Comment*  
 upon it, to be put to their last shifts to avoid the  
 force of it. It is in the *Epistle* to the *Hebrews*, at  
 the beginning of it; where the *Apostle* thus describes  
 the *Son of God*; God says he, *bath in these last days*  
*spoken to us by his son, whom he bath constituted heir of*  
*all things, by whom also he made the Worlds*, Heb. 1.  
 2. From whence he argues the Excellency of the  
*Gospel* above the *Law*: For the *Law* was given by  
*Angels*, but the *Gospel* by the *Son of God*; whose  
 pre-eminence above the *Angels* he shews at large in  
 the two first *Chapters* of this *Epistle*.

And to this end he proves the two parts of the De-  
 scription which had been given of him; namely, that  
 God had *constituted him heir of all things*, v. 2. and  
 that *by him he made the Worlds*.

First, That God had *constituted him heir of all*  
*things*, which is no where said of the *Angels*: But  
 of *him* it is said that he was *made so much better than*  
*the angels, as he bath by inheritance obtained a more*  
*excellent name than they*, v. 7. The *Angels* are only  
 called God's *Ministers*, for which the *Apostle* cites  
 the words of the *Psalmist*, Ps. 104. 4. but to *Christ*  
 he gives the Title of *his Son*, and *his first-begotten*,  
 by virtue whereof he is *heir of all things*: For to

SERM. *which of the angels said he at any time, thou art my*  
 XLIV. *son, this day have I begotten thee? v. 6. And this I*  
 *will agree with them to be spoken of Christ with re-*  
*spect to his Resurrection, by which, as St. Paul tells*  
*us, he was powerfully declared to be the son of God.*  
*Rom. 1. 4. This is the first Prerogative of Christ a-*  
*bove the Angels: But there is a far greater yet be-*  
*hind; for he proves,*

*Secondly, That he had not only the Title of God*  
*given him; but that he was truly and really God,*  
*because he made the World, v. 8. That the Title of*  
*God was given him he proves by a citation out of*  
*the Psalmist, Pl. 45. 6, 7. But unto the son he saith,*  
*thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever, &c. And*  
*that he was truly and really God because he made the*  
*World, he proves by a citation out of another Psalm,*  
*where it is said of him v. 10, 11, 12. Thou, Lord,*  
*in the beginning hast laid the foundations of the earth,*  
*and the heavens are the works of thy hands: They shall*  
*perish, &c.*

Let us now see how *Schlietzingius* and *Crellius* in-  
 terpret this *Text* cited out of the *Psalmist* by the  
*Apostle* as spoken of *Christ*. They say † that the  
*Author* of this *Epistle* could not have *referr'd* to *Christ*  
 the former *Words* of this *Citation*, which speak of  
 the creation of heaven and earth, unless he had taken  
 it for granted, that *Christ* is the most high God; e-  
 specially if they be understood, as they must necessari-  
 ly be by those who take this for granted, to be spoken  
 in the first place and directly to, or concerning *Christ*:  
 For since all the words of the *psalm* are manifestly  
 spoken of the most high God; but that *Christ* is that

† Ne referre quidem hæc priora verba, de cœli terræque  
 creatione loquentia ad Christum potuisset Autor, nisi pro con-  
 cesso sumisset Christum esse summum illum Deum, cœli et terræ  
 Creatorum; præsertim si ea, ut necesse foret, primò et directè ad  
 Christum dicta esse censeas. Nam cum omnia Psalmi verba ma-  
 nifestè de Deo loquuntur, Christum autem Deum illum esse ne  
 unico quidem verbo in toto hoc Psalmo indicetur; necesse est ut  
 si verba illa ad Christum directà esse velis, pro concessio sumas,  
 Christum esse Deum illum summum de quo in Psalmo sermo est.

God, is not signified, no not so much as by one word in *SERM.*  
that psalm; it is necessary, that if you will have these *XLIV.*  
words to be directed to Christ, you must take it for granted that Christ is that most high God of whom the  
psalmist there speaks.

Now we will join issue with these *Interpreters* upon this *Concession*, viz. that the *Author* of this *Epistle* could not have referr'd these words, which speak of the creation of heaven and earth, to Christ, without taking it for granted, that Christ is truly that God who made the World. And if the *Author* of this *Epistle* does affirm these words of the *Psalmist* to be spoken of Christ, then they must acknowledge Christ to be the true God who made Heaven and Earth: But the *Author* of this *Epistle* does as evidently affirm these words to be spoken to or of Christ, as he does the words of any other *Text* cited in this *Chapter*: And for this I appeal to the common sense of every Man that reads them.

These *Interpreters* indeed are contented that the latter part of this *Citation* should be spoken of Christ, but not the former: But why not the former as well as the latter? when they have so expressly told us, that all the words of this Psalm are manifestly spoken of God. What is the Mystery of this? Could they not as easily have interpreted the former part which speaks of the Creation of Heaven and Earth, concerning the moral World, and the new Creation or Reformation of Mankind by Jesus Christ and his Gospel, as well as so many other plain *Texts* to the same purpose? No doubt they could as well have done it, and have set as good a face upon it when they had done it. But why then did they not do it? it was for a Reason which they had no mind to tell, but yet it is not hard to be guess'd at; namely, that if they had admitted the former words to have been spoken of Christ, they knew not what to do with the latter part of this *Citation*; v. 11. 12, *They shall perish, but thou remainest; they shall wax old as a garment and as a vesture shalt thou fold them up, and they shall*



SERM. *be changed.* What shall *perish*, and *wax old*, and *be*  
 XLIV. *changed?* Why, the *Earth* and the *Heavens*, which  
 the *Son* had made; that is, the *moral World*, the  
 Reformation of Mankind, and the *new Creation* of  
 things by the Gospel: All these must have under-  
 gone the same fate with the *natural World*, and must  
 not only have been defaced, but utterly destroy'd  
 and brought to nothing. This they would not say,  
 but they did see it, though they would not seem to  
 see it: And we may plainly see by this, that they  
 can interpret a *Text* right when necessity forceth them  
 to it, and they cannot without great inconvenience  
 to their Cause avoid it: But when Men have once  
 resolv'd to hold fast an Opinion they have taken up,  
 it then becomes not only convenient but necessary to  
 understand nothing that makes against it: And this  
 is truly the present Case. But in the mean time  
 where is Ingenuity and love of Truth?

And thus I have with all the clearness, and brevity I could, search'd to the very foundations of this new Interpretation of this *Passage* of the *Evangelist*, upon which the *Divinity* of the *Son of God* is so firmly establish'd; and likewise of the gross Misinterpretations of several other *Texts* to the same purpose in this *Evangelist*, and in other *Books* of the *New Testament*. All which Interpretations I have endeavoured to shew to be not only contrary to the sense of all *Antiquity*, of which, as *Socinus* had but little knowledge, so he seems to have made but little account; but to be also evidently contrary to the perpetual tenor and style of the *Holy Scripture*.

Before I go off from this Argument, I cannot but take notice of one thing wherein our *Adversaries* in this Case do perpetually glory as a mighty advantage which they think they have over us in this *Point* of the *Divinity of the Son of God*, and consequently that other *Point of the blessed Trinity*; namely, that they have Reason clearly on *their* side in this *Controversy*, and that the Difficulties and Absurdities  
 are

are much greater and plainer on *our* part than on *theirs*. SERM.  
XLIV.

Here they are pleas'd to triumph without modesty, and without measure: And yet notwithstanding this, I am not afraid here likewise to join issue with them, and am contented to have this matter brought to a fair tryal at the Bar of *Reason*, as well as of *Scripture*, expounded by the general *Tradition* of the *Christian Church*: I say, by general *Tradition*, which next to *Scripture* is the best and surest confirmation of this great *Point* now in question between us, and that which gives us the greatest and truest light for the right understanding of the true sense and meaning of *Scripture*, not only in *this*, but in most other important *Doctrines* of the *Christian Religion*.

I am not without some *good hopes*, I will not say, *confidence*, for I never thought *that* to be so great an advantage to any cause as some Men would be glad to make others believe it is; hoping to help and support a weak Argument by a strong and mighty Confidence: But surely Modesty never hurt any Cause, and the *Confidence of Man* seems to me to be much like the *Wrath of Man*, which St. James tells us, *ch. i. v. 20. worketh not the righteousness of God*; that is, it never does any good, it never serves any wise and real purpose of Religion.

I say I am not without some good hopes, that I have in the foregoing *Discourses* clearly shewn, that the tenor of *Scripture* and *general Tradition* are on our side in this *Argument*, and therefore I shall not need to give my self the trouble to examine this matter over again.

Now as to the Point of *Reason*, the great *Difficulty* and *Absurdity*, which they object to our *Doctrine* concerning this *Mystery*, amounts to thus much, that it is not only above *Reason*, but plainly contrary to it.

As to its being above *Reason*, which they are loth to admit any thing to be; this I think will bear no

SERM. great Dispute: Because, if they would be pleas'd to  
 XLIV. speak out, they can mean no more by this, but that  
 our *Reason* is not able fully to comprehend it: But  
 what then? Are there no *Mysteries* in Religion? *That* I am sure they will not say, because God, whose infinite Nature and Perfections are the very Foundation of all Religion, is certainly the greatest *Mystery* of all other, and the most incomprehensible: But we must not, nay they will not for this reason deny, that there is such a Being as God. And therefore if there be *Mysteries* in Religion, it is no reasonable Objection against them that we cannot fully comprehend them: Because all *Mysteries* in what kind soever, whether in *Religion* or in *Nature*, so long, and so far as they are *Mysteries*, are for that very reason incomprehensible.

But they urge the matter much farther, that *this* particular *Mystery* now under debate is plainly contrary to *Reason*: And if they can make this good, I will confess that they have gained a great point upon us. But then they are to be put in mind, that to make this good against us they must clearly shew some plain *Contradiction* in this *Doctrine*, which I could never yet see done by any. Great *Difficulty* I acknowledge there is in the *Explication* of it, in which the further we go, beyond what God has thought fit to reveal to us in *Scripture* concerning it, the more we are entangled, and that which Men are pleas'd to call an *explaining* of it, does in my apprehension often make it more obscure; that is less plain than it was before; which does not so very well agree with a pretence of *Explication*.

Here then I fix my foot: That there are *three* Differences in the *Deity*, which the *Scripture* speaks of by the Names of *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*, and every where speaks of them as we use to do of *three* distinct *Persons*: And therefore I see no reason why in this Argument we should nicely abstain from using the word *Person*; though I remember that St.

Jerome



Jerome does some where desire to be excused from it. SERM.  
XLIV.

Now concerning these *Three* I might in the first place urge that plain and express *Text*, 1 John 5. 7. *There are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one:* But upon this I will not now insist, because it is pretended that in some *Copies* of greatest antiquity this *Verse* is omitted; the contrary whereof is I think capable of being made out very clearly: but this matter would be too long to be debated at present.

However that be, thus much is certain and cannot be denied, that our *Saviour* commanded his *Apostles* to baptize all Nations in the Name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost: And that the *Apostles* in their *Epistles* do in their most usual form of *Benediction* join these three together: And it is yet further certain, that not only the Name and Title of God, but the most incommunicable *Properties* and *Perfections* of the *Deity*, are in *Scripture* frequently ascribed to the Son and the Holy Ghost; one *Property* only excepted, which is peculiar to the Father as he is the Principle and Fountain of the *Deity*, that he is of himself and of no other; which is not, nor can be said of the Son and Holy Ghost.

Now let any Man shew any plain and downright *Contradiction* in all this; or any other *Difficulty* besides this, that the particular manner of the existence of these three *Differences* or *Persons* in the *Divine Nature*, express'd in *Scripture* by the Names of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, is incomprehensible by our finite Understandings, and inexplicable by us: In which I do not see what Absurdity there is, since our *Adversaries* cannot deny that many things certainly are, the particular manner of whose existence we can neither comprehend, nor explain.

Let us now see, whether the *Opinion* of our *Adversaries* hath not greater *Difficulties* in it, and more palpable *Absurdities* following from it. They say, that the Son of God is a mere Creature; not God by Nature,

SERM. *Nature*, and yet truly and really God by *Office* and XLIV. by Divine appointment and constitution; to whom the very same Honour and Worship is to be given which we give to *Him* who is God by *Nature*.

And can they discern no *Difficulty*, no *Absurdity* in this? What? no *absurdity* in bringing *Idolatry* by a *back-door* into the *Christian Religion*, one main Design whereof was to banish *Idolatry* out of the World? And will they in good earnest contest this matter with us, that the giving *Divine Worship* to a *meer Creature* is not *Idolatry*? And can they vindicate themselves in this Point any other way, than what will in a great measure acquit both the *Pagans* and the *Papists* from the charge of *Idolatry*.

What? no *Absurdity* in a God as it were *but of yesterday*? in a *Creature-God*, in a God merely by *positive Institution*; and this in opposition to a plain *moral Precept* of eternal obligation, and to the fix'd and immutable *Nature* and *Reason* of things?

So that to avoid the *shadow* and appearance of a *Plurality* of *Deities* they run really into it, and for any thing I can see, into down-right *Idolatry*, by *worshipping a Creature besides the Creator*, who is *blest for ever*, Rom. 1. 25.

They can by no means allow *two Gods* by *Nature*; no more can *we*; But they can willingly admit of *two Gods*; the *one* by *Nature*, and the other by *Office*, to whom they are content to pay the same *Honour* which is due to *Him* who is God by *Nature*. Provided *Christ* will be contented to be but a *Creature*, they will deal more liberally with him in another way than in *Reason* is fit.

And do they see no *Absurdity* in all this? nothing that is contrary to *Reason* and *good Sense*? nothing that feels like *Inconsistency* and *Contradiction*? Do they consider how often God hath declar'd, that *he will not give his glory to another*? Gal. 4. 8. And that the *Apostle* describes *Idolatry* to be, the giving *service*, or *worship*, to things *which by Nature are no Gods*?

Surely

Surely if *Reason* guided by *Divine Revelation* were SERM.  
to chuse a God, it would make choice of one who XLIV.  
is declared in Scripture to be *the only begotten of the*  
*Father, the first and the last, the beginning and the*  
*end, the same yesterday, to day and for ever*: much ra-  
ther than a mere *Creature*, who did not begin to be  
till about *seventeen hundred years ago*.

I only propose these things, without any artificial  
aggravation, to *their* most serious and impartial confi-  
deration; after which I cannot think that these  
great *Masters of Reason* can think it so easy a mat-  
ter to extricate themselves out of these *Difficulties*.  
The *God of Truth* lead us into all Truth, and en-  
lighten the Minds of those who are in Error, and  
give them *Repentance to the acknowledgment of the*  
*Truth*: For *his* sake who is *the Way, the Truth, and*  
*the Life*.

And thus much may suffice to have said upon this  
Argument, which I am sensible is mere Controversy:  
A thing which I seldom meddle with, and do  
not delight to dwell upon. But my *Text*, which is  
so very proper for this *Season*, hath almost necessari-  
ly engaged me in it: Besides, that I think it a *Point*  
of that concernment, that all *Christians* ought to be  
well instructed in it. And I have chosen rather once  
for all to handle it fully and to go to the bottom of it,  
than in every *Sermon* to be flurting at it, without  
saying any thing to the purpose against it: A way  
which in my opinion is neither proper to establish  
Men in the Truth, nor to convince them of their  
Error.

I shall only at present make this short Reflection  
upon the whole; That we ought to treat the *Holy*  
*Scriptures* as the *Oracles of God*, with all reverence  
and submission of Mind to the Doctrine therein re-  
vealed: And to interpret them with that candor  
and simplicity which is due to the sincere Declara-  
tions of God intended for the instruction and not for  
the deception and delusion of Men: I say, we  
should treat them as the *Oracles of God*, and not  
like



SERM. like the *doubtful Oracles* of the *Heathen Deities*, that  
 XLIV. is, in truth of the *Devil*; which were contrived and  
 calculated on purpose to deceive, containing and for  
 the most part intending a sense directly contrary to  
 the appearing and most obvious meaning of the  
 Words: For the *Devil* was the first *Author* of *Equivocation*; though the *Jesuits* have since made it a  
 lawful way of lying, which *their Father*, of whom  
 they learn'd it, hath not credit and authority enough  
 to do.

And it deserves likewise to be very well considered by us, that nothing hath given a greater force to the Exceptions of the Church of *Rome* against the *Holy Scriptures*, being a sufficient and certain Rule of Faith, than the uncertainty into which they have brought the plainest *Texts* imaginable for the establishing of Doctrines of greatest moment in the *Christian Religion*, by their remote and wrested interpretation of them: Which way of dealing with them seems to be really more contumelious to those *Holy Oracles*, than the downright rejecting of their Authority: Because this is a fair and open way of attacking them, whereas the other is an insidious, and therefore more dangerous way of undermining them.

But as for us who do in good earnest believe the Divine Authority of the *Holy Scriptures*, let us take all our Doctrines and Opinions from those clear Fountains of Truth, not disturb'd and darkned by searching anxiously into all the possible Senses that the several words and expressions of *Scripture* can bear, and by forcing that sense upon them which is most remote and unnatural, and in the mean time wilfully overlooking and passing by that sense which is most obvious and easy to the common apprehension of any unbiass'd and impartial Reader. This is to use the *Holy Scriptures* as the Church of *Rome* have done many holy and good Men whom they are pleased to brand with the odious Name of *Hereticks*, to torture them till they speak the Mind of  
 their

their Tormentors though never so contrary to their own. SERM.  
XLIV.

I will now conclude this whole Discourse with a Saying which I heard from a great and judicious Man, *Non amo nimis argutam Theologiam; I love no Doctrines in Divinity which stand so very much upon quirk and subtilty.*

And I cannot upon this occasion forbear to say, that those Doctrines of Religion and those Interpretations of *Scripture* have ever been to me the most suspected, which need abundance of Wit and a great many *Criticisms* to make them out: And considering the Wisdom and Goodness of Almighty God, I cannot possibly believe but that all things necessary to be believ'd and practis'd by *Christians* in order to their eternal Salvation are plainly contain'd in the *Holy Scriptures*: God surely hath not dealt so hardly with Mankind as to make any thing necessary to be believ'd or practis'd by us which he hath not made sufficiently plain to the capacity of the unlearned as well as of the learned. God forbid that it should be impossible for any man to saved and to get to Heaven without a great deal of Learning to direct and carry him thither, when the far greatest part of Mankind have no Learning at all. It was well said by *Erasmus*, *That it was never well with the Christian World since it began to be a matter of so much Subtily and Wit for a Man to be a true Christian.*

## SERMON XLV.

Concerning the Incarnation of Christ.

*Preached in the Church of St. Lawrence-Jewry, Decemb. 21. 1680.*

JOHN i. 14.

*The Word was made flesh.*SERM.  
XLV.

**T**HE last Year about this time, and upon the same Occasion of the Annual Commemoration of the *Incarnation* and *Nativity* of our *Blessed Lord and Saviour*, I began to discourse to you upon these Words: In which I told you were contained *three* great Points concerning our *Saviour*, the Author and Founder of our *Religion*.

*First*, His *Incarnation*; *the Word was made*, or became *flesh*.

*Secondly*, His *Life* and *Conversation* here among us; and *dwelt among us*, ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, *he pitched his Tabernacle among us*, he lived here below in this World, and for some time made his residence and abode with us.

*Thirdly*, That in this state of his Humiliation he gave great and clear evidence of his Divinity: Whilst he appear'd as a Man and lived amongst us, there were great and glorious Testimonies given of him, that he was the Son of God; and that in so peculiar a manner as no Creature can be said to be. *And we beheld his Glory, the Glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.*

I began with the first of these, namely, his *Incarnation*, *the Word was made flesh*: For the full and clear explication of which Words I proposed to consider these *two* things.

I. The



I. The *Person* here spoken of, and who it is that **SERM.** is here said to be incarnate, or made *flesh*, namely **XLV.** *the Word*. And this I have handled at large in my two former *Discourses* upon this *Text*. I shall now proceed in the

II. *Second* place to give some account of the nature and manner of this *Incarnation*, so far as the *Scripture* hath thought fit to reveal and declare this *Mystery* to us. *The Word was made flesh*, that is, He who is personally called the *Word*, and whom the *Evangelist* hath so fully and clearly described in the beginning of this *Gospel*, he became *flesh*; that is, assumed our Nature and became *Man*, for so the *Word flesh* is frequently used in *Scripture*, for *Man* or Human Nature.

So that by the *Word's* becoming *flesh*, that is, *Man*, the *Evangelist* did not only intend to express to us that he assumed a human *Body* without a *Soul*, but that he became a *perfect Man*, consisting of *Soul* and *Body* united. It is very probable indeed that the *Evangelist* did purposely chuse the word *flesh*, which signifies the frail and mortal part of Humanity, to denote to us the great condescension of the *Son of God* in assuming our Nature with all its Infirmities, and becoming subject to frailty and mortality for our sake.

Having thus explained the meaning of this *Proposition*, the *Word was made flesh*, I shall in a further prosecution of this Argument take into consideration these *three* things.

*First*, I shall consider more distinctly what may reasonably be suppos'd to be implied in this expression of the *Word's being made flesh*.

*Secondly*, I shall consider the *Objections* which are commonly brought against this *Incarnation* of the *Son of God* from the seeming impossibility, or incongruity of the thing.

*Thirdly*, And because, after all that can be said in answer to those *Objections*, it may still appear to us very strange, that God who could without all this circum-

SERM. circumstance, and condescension even almost beneath  
 XLV. the Majesty of the great God, at least as we are  
 apt to think have given Laws to Mankind, and  
 have offer'd forgiveness of Sins and eternal Life upon  
 their Repentance for sins past, and sincere though  
 imperfect obedience for the future; I say, it may  
 seem strange, that notwithstanding this God should  
 yet make choice of this way and method of our Sal-  
 vation: I shall therefore in the last place endeavour  
 to give some probable account of this strange and  
 wonderful Dispensation, and shew that it was done  
 in great condescension to the weakness and common  
 prejudices of Mankind; and that when it is through-  
 ly consider'd it will appear to be much more for our  
 comfort and advantage than any other way which  
 the wisdom of this World would have been apt to de-  
 vise and pitch upon. And in all this I shall all along  
 take either the plain declarations of Scripture, or  
 the pregnant intimations of it for my ground and  
 guide.

I. I shall consider more distinctly *what may reason-  
 ably be supposed to be implied in this expression of the  
 Word's being made flesh*; namely, these five things.

*First, The truth and reality of the thing:* That  
 the Son of God did not only appear in the form of  
 human flesh, but did really assume it: *the Word was  
 made flesh*, as the *Evangelist* expressly declares: For  
 if this had been only a *Phantasm* and *Apparition*, as  
 some Hereticks of old did fancy, it would in all  
 probability have been like the appearance of *Angels*  
 mentioned in the *Old Testament*, sudden and of short  
 continuance, and would after a little while have va-  
 nish'd and disappear'd. But *he dwelt among us*, and  
 convers'd familiarly with us a long time, and for  
 many years together; and the *Scripture* useth all the  
 expressions which are proper to signify a real Man,  
 and a real *Human Body*, and there were all the signs  
 and evidences of reality that could be. For the  
*Word* is said to be made *flesh*, and *Christ* is said to be  
*of the Seed of David according to the flesh*, and to be  
 made

*Five things  
 implied in  
 Word's being  
 made flesh -  
 1 -  
 the truth and  
 reality of the  
 thing*

made of a Woman; and all this to shew that he was a SERM. real Man, and had a real and substantial Body: For XLV. he was born, and by degrees grew up to be a Man, and did perform all such actions as are natural and proper to Men: He continued a great while in the World, and at last suffer'd and dy'd, and was laid in the Grave. He did not vanish and disappear like a Phantasm or Spirit, but he dy'd like other Men: And his Body was rais'd again out of the Grave; and after he was risen, he conversed forty days upon Earth, and permitted his Body to be handled; and last of all was visibly taken up into Heaven.

So that either we must grant Him to have had a real Body, or we have cause to doubt whether all Mankind be not mere Phantasms and Apparitions: For greater evidence no Man can give that he is really cloathed with and carries about him a true and substantial Body, than the Son of God did in the days of his flesh. It is to me very wonderful, upon what ground, or indeed to what end, the Hereticks of old, Marcion and others, did deny the reality of Christ's flesh. Surely they had a great mind to be Hereticks who took up so senseless an Opinion for no reason, and to no purpose.

Secondly, Another thing implied in the Word's being made flesh, is, that this was done peculiarly for the benefit and advantage of Men. The Word was made flesh, that is, became Man; for so I have shewn the word flesh to be often used in Scripture. And this the Author of the Epistle to the Hebrews takes very special notice of as a great grace and favour of God to Mankind, that his Son appear'd in our Nature, and consequently for our Salvation; as it is said in the Nicene Creed, *who for us Men and for our Salvation came down from Heaven and was incarnate, &c.* Heb. 2. 16. For verily, says the Apostle, he took not on him the nature of Angels, but of the seed of Abraham, *ὁ γὰρ δι' αὐτῶν ἀγγέλων ἐπιλαμβάνεται*, he did not assume the Angelical Nature, so our Translators understood the phrase; but the word also signifies to take hold of a thing



SERM. which is falling, as well as to *assume* or *take on him*.  
 XLV. He did not take hold of the Angels when they were falling, but suffered them to lapse irrecoverably into misery and ruin : but *he took hold* of Human Nature when it was falling, and particularly of the seed of Abraham ; and by the seed of Abraham, that is, by himself in whom all the Nations of the Earth were blessed, he brought Salvation first to the Jews, and then to the rest of Mankind. The Apostle chuses to derive this Blessing from Abraham, that so he might bring it nearer to the Jews to whom he wrote this Epistle, and might thereby more effectually recommend the Gospel to them, and the glad tidings of that great Salvation in which they had so peculiar an Interest.

And it is some confirmation of the Interpretation I have given of that expression, *he took not on him*, &c. that the Evangelist uses the very same word for taking hold of one that was ready to sink : For so it is said of St. Peter when he was ready to sink, that Matth. 14. 31. Christ put forth his hand, *καὶ ἐπιλάβη*, and caught hold of him, and saved him from drowning : And thus the Son of God caught hold of Mankind which was ready to sink into eternal perdition. He laid hold of our Nature, or as it is express'd in the same Chapter, *he took part of flesh and blood*, that in our Nature he might be capable of effecting our Redemption and Deliverance.

But it is no where said in Scripture, not the least intimation given there, that the Son of God ever shew'd such grace and favour to the Angels : But the Word became flesh, that is, became Man : He did not assume the Angelical Nature, but was contented to be cloathed with the Rags of Humanity, and to be made in the likeness of sinful flesh, that is, of sinful Man.

3 Thirdly, This expression of the Word's being made flesh, may further imply his assuming the infirmities, and submitting to the miseries of Human Nature. This I collect from the word *flesh*, by which the Scripture often

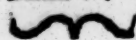
often uses to express our frail and mortal Nature. **SERM.**  
The *Son of God* did not only condescend to be made **XLV.**

*Man*, but also to become mortal and miserable for our sakes: He submitted to all those things which are accounted most grievous and calamitous to human Nature: To hunger and want, to shame and contempt, to bitter pains and agonies, and to a most cruel and disgraceful death: So that in this sense also *he became flesh*, not only by being cloathed with human Nature, but by becoming liable to all the frailties and sufferings of it; of which he had a greater share than any of the Sons of Men ever had: for never was sorrow like to his sorrow, nor sufferings like to his sufferings, the weight and bitterness whereof was such as to wring from him, the meekest and most patient endurer of sufferings that ever was, that doleful complaint. *My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?*

*Fourthly*, In this expression, *the word was made flesh*, is likewise imply'd *the Union of the Divinity with human Nature in one Person*. And this the *Text* expresseth in such words as seem to signify a most perfect, and intimate, and vital Union of the *divine* and *human* Natures of *Christ* in one *Person*. *The Word was made*, or *became flesh*: Which what else can it signify but one of these two things? Either that the *Eternal Word* and *only begotten Son of God* was changed into a *Man*, which is not only impossible to be, but impious to imagine: Or else, that the *Son of God* did assume our Nature and became *Man*, by his *Divinity* being united to *human Nature*, as the *Soul* is vitally united to the *Body*; without either being changed into it, or confounded with it, or swallowed up by it, as the *Eutychian Hereticks* fancied the *human Nature* of *Christ* to be swallowed up of his *Divinity*: Which had it been so, *St. John* had expressed himself very untowardly when he says, *the Word became flesh*; for it had been quite contrary, and *flesh had become the Word*, being changed into it, and swallowed up by it, and lost in it.

SERM.

XLV.



The only thing then that we can reasonably imagine to be the meaning of this expression is this, that the *Son of God* assumed *our Nature*, and united himself with it, as our *Souls* are united with our *Bodies*: And as the *Soul* and *Body* united make one *Person*, and yet retain their distinct *Natures* and *Properties*; so may we conceive the *divine* and *human* *Natures* in *Christ* to be united into one *Person*: And this without any change or confusion of the two *Natures*.

I say, the *Divinity* united it self with *human Nature*: For though *flesh* be only mentioned in the *Text*, yet he did not only assume a *human Body*, which was the Heresy of *Apollinaris* and his Followers, upon a mistake of *this* and some other *Texts* of *Scripture*: but he assumed the *whole human Nature*; that is, a *human Soul* united to a real and natural *Body*: for so I have shewn the word *flesh* to be frequently used in *Scripture*, not only for the *Body* but for the *whole Man*, by an usual Figure of Speech: As on the other hand, *Soul* is frequently used for the *whole Man* or *Person*: So many *Souls* are said to have gone down with *Jacob* into *Egypt*, that is so many *Persons*.

But this I need not insist longer upon, our *Saviour* being so frequently in *Scripture*, and so expressly said to be a *Man*; which could with no propriety of speech have been said, had he only assumed a *human Body*: Nor could he have been said to have been *made in all things like unto us, sin only excepted*, had he only had a *human Body* but not a *Soul*: For then the meaning must have been, that he had been *made in all things like unto us*, that is, like to a *Man*, that only excepted which chiefly makes the *Man*; that is the *Soul*: And the addition of those words, *Sin only excepted*, had been no less strange; because a *human Body*, without a *Soul*, is neither capable of being said to have *Sin*, or to be without it.

And this may suffice to have been spoken in general concerning that great *Mystery* of the *Hypostatical*, as they that love hard words love to call it, or *Personal*



sonal Union of the *divine* and *human* Natures in the **SERM.**  
 Person of our *Blessed Saviour*. In the more particu- **XLV.**  
 lar explication whereof it is not safe for our shallow  
 understandings to wade further than the *Scripture*  
 goes before us, for fear we go out of our depth and  
 lose our selves in the profound enquiry into the deep  
 things of God, which he has not thought fit in this  
 present state of darkness and imperfection to reveal  
 more plainly and fully to us. It ought to be thought  
 sufficient that the *Scripture* speaking of the same *Per-*  
*son, Jesus Christ* our *Blessed Saviour*, doth frequently  
 and expressly call him both *God* and *Man*: Which  
 how it can be so easily conceived upon any other Sup-  
 position than that of the Union of the *divine* and *hu-*  
*man Natures* in one *Person*, I must confess that I am  
 not able to comprehend.

*Fifthly* and lastly, All this which I have shewn to  
 be implied in this *Proposition, the word was made*  
*flesh*, does signify to us the wonderful and amazing  
 condescension and love of God to Mankind in  
 sending his *Son* into the World, and submitting him  
 to this way and method for our Salvation and Recovery.  
*The Word was made flesh*: What a step is here made  
 in order to the reconciling of Men to God? From  
*Heaven to Earth*; from the top of Glory and Majesty  
 to the lowest gulf of meanness and misery: the *E-*  
*vangelist* seems here to use the word *flesh*, which  
 signifies the meanest and vilest part of Humanity,  
 to express to us how low the *Son of God* was content-  
 ed to stoop for the Redemption of *Man*. *The Word*  
*was made flesh*: Two terms at the greatest distance  
 from one another, are here brought together: The  
*Son of God* is here expressed to us by one of his highest  
 and most glorious Titles, the *Word*, which imports  
 both *Power* and *Wisdom*: 1 Cor. 1. 24. *Christ the*  
*Power of God, and the Wisdom of God*, as the *Apostle*  
 calls him: And *human Nature* is here described by  
 its vilest part, *flesh*; which imports frailty and infir-  
 mity: *The Word became flesh*, that is, submitted to  
 that from which it was at the greatest distance: *He*

SERM. who was the *Power of God, and the Wisdom of God*,  
 XLV. submitted not only to be called, but really to become a frail and miserable *Man*; not only to assume our Nature, but to put on all the Infirmities, and which is the greatest of all, the *Mortality* of it.

And this is the *great Mystery of Godliness*, that is, of the *Christian Religion*, that *God* should be manifested in the *flesh*, and become *Man*, with a most gracious and merciful design to bring *Man* back again to *God*: That he should become a miserable and a mortal *Man* to save us from eternal *death*, and to make us partakers of everlasting *life*: That the *Son of God* should condescend to inhabit our vile Nature, to wear *Rags* and to become a *Beggar* for our sakes; and all this not only to repair those dismal Ruins which Sin had made in it, and to restore us to our former estate; but to better and advance our condition, and by degrees to bring us to a state of much greater perfection and happiness than that from which we fell.

And that he should become man on purpose that he might dwell among us, and converse with us, and thoroughly instruct us in our Duty, and shew us the way to eternal life by his heavenly Doctrine, and as it were take us by the hand and lead us in that way by the perfect and familiar Example of a most blameless and holy life; shewing us how *God himself* thought fit to live in this World, when he was pleased to become man.

That by conversing with us in the likeness and nature of man, he might become a human, and in some sort an equal and familiar, an imitable and encouraging Example of innocency and goodness, of meekness and humility, of patience and submission to the Will of God under the sorest affliction and sufferings, and in a word, a most perfect Pattern of a Divine and Heavenly Conversation upon Earth.

And that by this means we might for our greater encouragement in holiness and virtue, see all that which

which the Law of God requires of us exemplified in SERM. our Nature, and really performed and practised by XLV. a man like our selves.

And that likewise in our nature he might conquer and triumph over the *two* great Enemies of our Salvation, the *World* and the *Devil*: And by first suffering *Death*, and then overcoming it, and by rescuing our nature from the power of it by his Resurrection from the dead, he might *deliver us from the fear of Death*, and give us the glorious hopes of a blessed *Immortality*: For by assuming our frail and mortal Nature he became capable of suffering and of shedding his precious Blood for us, and by that means of purchasing *forgiveness of sins* and *eternal redemption for us*.

And further yet, that by being subject to the Miseries and Infirmities of Humanity, he might from his own Experience, the surest and most sensible sort of knowledge and instruction, learn to have a more compassionate sense of our infirmities, and be more apt to commiserate us in all our sufferings and temptations, and more ready to *succour us* labouring under them.

And finally, that as a Reward of his obedience and sufferings in our Nature, he might in the same nature be *exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high*, there to continue *for ever to make intercession for us*.

II. I shall in the next place consider the *Objections* against the *Incarnation* of the *Son of God*, from the supposed *impossibility* and incongruity of the thing. I shall mention *three*, and endeavour in as few words as I can to give a clear and satisfactory *Answer* to them.

*First*, it is objected, that the *Incarnation* of the *Son of God*, as I have explained it, necessarily supposing an Union of the *Divinity* with human *Nature*, is, if not altogether *impossible*, yet a very unintelligible thing.



SERM. Now that there is no Impossibility in the thing  
 XLV. seems to be very evident from the Instance whereby  
 I have endeavoured to illustrate it, of the Union between the *Soul* and the *Body* of Man, which we must acknowledge to be a thing possible, because we are sure that it is; and yet no man can explain, either to himself or to any one else, the manner how it is, or can be conceived to be; but for all that we are certain, as we can be of any thing, that it is so.

And is it not every whit as possible for God, if he so pleases, to unite *himself* to *human Nature*, as it is for the *Soul* to be united to the *Body*? And that we are not able to conceive the manner how this is or can be done, ought not in reason be any prejudice against the truth and certainty of the thing: This indeed may make it seem strange to us, but by no means incredible: Because we do most firmly believe a great many things to be, the manner of whose Being we do not at all comprehend. And therefore I take it for an undoubted *Principle* which no Man can gainsay, *That to assure us that a thing really is, it is not necessary for us to know the manner how it is, or can be*: It is sufficient for us to know, that the thing is not impossible; and of *that* we have the very best *Demonstration* that can be, if we be sure that it is.

*Secondly*, Supposing this thing to be possible, and capable in any measure to be understood, which yet I have shewn not to be necessary to our firm belief of it: It is further objected, that it seems to be a thing very incongruous, and much beneath the Dignity of the *Son of God*, to be united to *human Nature*, and to submit to so near Alliance with that which is so very mean and despicable: Yea to be infinitely more below *Him*, than for the greatest *Prince* in this World to match with the poorest and most contemptible Beggar.

But herein surely we measure God too much by our selves, and because we *who are evil* have seldom so much goodness as to stoop beneath ourselves for the

the benefit and good of others, we are apt to think **SERM.** that God hath not so much goodness neither: And **XLV.** because our ill nature, and pride, and folly, as indeed all pride is folly, will not suffer us to do it, we presently conclude that it doth not become God. But what *Pliny* said to the Emperor *Trajan* concerning earthly Kings and Potentates, is much more true of the *Lord of Glory*, the great King of Heaven and Earth; *Cui nihil ad augendum fastigium superest, hoc uno modo crescere potest, si seipse submittat, securus magnitudinis suæ*; He that is at the top, and can rise no higher, hath yet this one way left to become greater, by stooping beneath himself; which he may very safely do, being secure of his own Greatness. The lower any Being, be he never so high, condescends to do good, the glory of his Goodness shines so much the brighter. Men are many times too proud and stiff to bend, too perverse and ill-natur'd to stoop beneath their own little Greatness for the good of others: But God, whose ways are not as our ways, and whose thoughts are as much above our low and narrow thoughts, as the Heavens are high above the Earth, did not disdain nor think it below him to become Man for the good of Mankind; and, as much as the Divinity is capable of being so, to become miserable to make us happy. We may be afraid that if we humble ourselves we shall be despis'd, that if we stoop others will get above us and trample upon us: But God, though he condescend never so low, is still secure of his own Greatness, and that none can take it from him.

So, that in truth, and according to right Reason, it was no real diminution or disparagement to the Son of God to become Man for the Salvation of Mankind: But on the contrary, it was a most glorious Humility, and the greatest Instance of the truest Goodness that ever was. And therefore the *Apostle* to the *Hebrews*, Heb. 5. 5. when he says, that *Christ glorified not himself to be made an High Priest, but was appointed of God to this Office, as was Aaron*; does hereby

SERM. hereby seem to intimate, that it was a *glory* to the  
 XLV. *Son of God to be made a High Priest* for the Sons of  
 Men: For though it was a strange condescension,  
 yet was it likewise a most wonderful Argument of  
 his Goodness, which is the highest Glory of the  
 Divine Nature.

In short, if God for our sakes did submit himself  
 to a condition which we may think did less become  
 him, here is a great cause of thankfulness, but none  
 surely of cavil and exception: We have infinite rea-  
 son to acknowledge and admire his Goodness, but  
 none at all to upbraid him with his kindness, and  
 to quarrel with him for having descended so much  
 beneath himself to testify his love to us and his ten-  
 der concernment for our happiness: Besides, that  
 when we have said all we can about this matter, I  
 hope we will allow God himself to be the best and  
 most competent Judge what is fit for God to do;  
 and that he needs not to take counsel of any of his  
 Creatures, what will best become him in this or any  
 other Case: *Job 33. 12, 13. Behold in this thou art  
 not just; I will answer thee, that God is greater than  
 man: Why dost thou dispute against him? for he giveth  
 not account of any of his matters.*

Thirdly, If our Reason could get over this diffi-  
 culty, and admit that God might become *Man*; yet it  
 seems very unsuitable to the *Son of God*, and to his  
 great Design of instructing and reforming Mankind,  
 to appear in so low and suffering a condition. This,  
 to the *Heathen Philosophers*, who as the *Apostle* tells  
 us, *by Wisdom knew not God*, did not only seem un-  
 reasonable, but even ridiculous: So *St. Paul* tells us,  
*We*, says he, *1 Cor. 1. 12. preach Christ crucified,*  
*to the Jews a stumbling-block, and to the Greeks foolish-*  
*ness*: To think that so poor and mean a Man was fit  
 to give Laws to Mankind, and to awe the Minds  
 of Men by the Authority of his Doctrine: That  
 one who was put to Death himself should be be-  
 liev'd by others when he promised to them Life  
 and



and Immortality in another World, could not but appear very strange and unreasonable.

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For answer to this, besides other excellent Reasons and Ends which the Scripture expressly assigns of our *Blessed Saviour's* Humiliation, in his assuming our Nature with the frailties and miseries of it : As that he might be a *Teacher*, and an *Example* to us : that by his bitter *Passion* he might make Expiation for Sin, and set us a pattern of the greatest meekness and patience under the greatest provocations and sufferings : that having suffered so grievously himself, he might know how to commiserate and pity us in all our temptations and sufferings : That *by death he might destroy him that had the power of death ; that is, the Devil ; and might deliver those who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage* : I say, besides all this, it was of great use that the great *Teacher* and *Reformer* of Mankind should live in so mean and afflicted a condition, to confront the pride and vanity of the World by this consideration, that the Son of God, and the very best Man that ever was, was a *Beggar*, and *had not where to lay his head* : And likewise to convince Men of these two great Truths, *That God may grievously afflict those whom he dearly loves ; and That it is possible for Men to be innocent and contented in the midst of poverty, and reproach, and sufferings*.

Had our *Blessed Saviour* appeared in the *Person* and *Pomp* of a great *temporal Prince*, the influence of his Authority and Example would probably have made more Hypocrites and servile Converts, but not have persuaded Men one jot more to be inwardly holy and good. The great Arguments that must do that, must not be fetch'd from the Pomp and Prosperity of this World, but from the great and eternal Recompences of the other.

And it is very well worth our observation, that nothing puzzled *Cæsar Vaninus*, who was perhaps the first, and the only *Martyr* for *Atheism* that ever was ; I say, nothing puzzled him more, than that he could  
not

SERM. not from the History of our Saviour's Life and Ac-  
 XLV. tions, written by the *Evangelists* with so native a  
 ~~~~~ simplicity, fasten upon him any probable imputation  
 of a secular interest and design in any thing that he
 said or did. No doubt but *Vaninus*, before he made
 this acknowledgment, had searched very narrowly
 into this matter; and could he have found any co-
 lour for such an Imputation, he would have thought
 it sufficient to have blasted both Him and his Re-
 ligion.

You may be pleased to consider further, that it
 was the Opinion of the wisest *Jews*, that the best
 Men, *the Children of God*, who called God *their Fa-
 ther*, were many times exposed to the greatest suffer-
 ings and reproaches for the trial of their faith, and
 meekness, and patience, as we may see at large in
 the *Wisdom of Solomon*, where speaking of the Ma-
 lice and Enmity of the wicked to one that was emi-
 nently righteous, he brings them in saying after this
 manner; Chap. i. 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19,
 20. *Let us lie in wait for the righteous, because he is
 not for our turn; he is clean contrary to our doings:
 He upbraideth us with our offending the Law, and ob-
 jecteth to our infancy the transgressions of our youth: He
 professeth to have the knowledge of God, and he calleth
 himself the Child of the Lord: He is grievous unto us
 even to behold; for his life is not like other mens, his
 ways are of another fashion: We are esteemed of him
 as counterfeits, he abstaineth from our ways as from
 filthiness: He pronounceth the end of the just to be
 blessed, and maketh his boast that God is his Father:
 Let us see if his words be true, and what shall hap-
 pen in the end of him: For if the just man be the Son
 of God, he will help him, and deliver him from the
 hands of his Enemies: Let God examine him with de-
 spitefulness and torture, that we may know his meek-
 ness and prove his patience: Let us condemn him to
 a shameful Death, &c.*

This is so exact a Character of our *Blessed Saviour*,
 both in respect of the holiness and innocency of his
 Life,

Life, and of the reproaches and sufferings which he SERM.
met with from the wicked and malicious *Jews*, who XLV.
persecuted him all his life, and at last conspir'd
his death, that whoever reads this passage can hardly
forbear to think it a Prophetical Description of
the innocency and sufferings of the *Blessed Jesus* :
For *He* certainly in the most eminent manner was
the *Son of God*, being called by the *Evangelist*, the
only begotten of the *Father*.

Or if this was not a *Prediction* concerning our
blessed *Saviour*, yet thus much at least may be con-
cluded from it, that in the judgment of the *wisest*
among the *Jews*, it was not unworthy of the Good-
ness and Wisdom of the divine Providence to per-
mit the best Man to be so ill treated by wicked
Men : And further, that in their judgment the in-
nocency and virtues of an eminently righteous Man
are then set off to the best advantage, and do shine
forth with the greatest lustre, when he is under the
hardest circumstances of suffering and persecution
from an evil World.

Add to this likewise, that the best and wisest of
the *Heathen Philosophers* do frequently inculcate such
Doctrines as these : That *worldly greatness and power*
are not to be admired, but rather to be despised by a wise
man. That *Men may be very good and dear to the*
Gods, and yet liable to the greatest miseries and sufferings
in this World. That *whoever suffers unjustly, and*
bears it patiently, gives the greatest testimony to good-
ness, and does most effectually recommend piety and vir-
tue, as things of greater value than the ease and plea-
sure of this present life : Nay further, that a good
Man cast into the hardest circumstances of poverty and
misery, of reproach and suffering, is the fittest person of
all other to be the Minister, and Apostle, and Preacher
of God to mankind : Which are the very Words of
Arian a Heathen Philosopher, in his Discourses of *E-*
pietetus. Now surely they who say such things have
no reason to object to our blessed *Saviour* his low and
suffering condition, as misbecoming one that was
to

to be the great *Teacher* and *Reformer* of the World.

And as to that part of the *Objection*, that he who so freely promised *Immortality* to others could not, or however did not, save himself from *Death*: This vanisheth into nothing when we consider that he rescued himself from the power of the Grave: And it is so far from being *ridiculous* to rely upon his Promise of raising us up from the dead, that the *Objection* it self is really *so*. For can any thing be more reasonable than to rely upon him for our hopes of *Immortality*, who by rising from the Grave himself, and by conquering the Powers of *Death* and *Darkness*, and *triumphing openly* over them by his visible *Ascension* into Heaven, hath given so plain and sensible a *Demonstration* to all Mankind, that he is able to make good to the uttermost all the glorious Promises which he hath made to us of a blessed Resurrection to eternal Life and Happiness in another World? *To him be Glory and Dominion for ever and ever. Amen.*

SERMON XLVI.

Concerning the Incarnation of Christ.

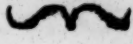
Preached in the Church of St. Lawrence-Jewry, Decemb. 28. 1680.

JOHN i. 14.

The Word was made flesh.

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THE *third* and last thing which I proposed upon this Argument of the *Incarnation* of the *Son of God* was to give some account of this *Dispensation*, and to shew that the

the Wisdom of God thought fit thus to order things SERM.
in great condescension to the weakness and common XLVI.
prejudices of Mankind: And that when all things 
are duly weighed and consider'd, it will appear
much more for our comfort and advantage, than any
other way which the Wisdom of Men would have
been most apt to devise and pitch upon.

And it is the more necessary to give some account
of this matter, because after all that hath hitherto
been said in answer to the Objections against it, it
may still seem very strange to a considering Man,
that God, who could without all this Circumstance
and Condescension have done the business for which
his Son came into the World and appear'd in our
Nature; that is, could have given the same Laws to
Mankind, and have offer'd to us the forgiveness of
our Sins, and eternal Life upon our Repentance for
Sins past, and a sincere endeavour of Obedience for
the future: I say that notwithstanding this, he
should yet make choice of this way for the Re-
demption and Recovery of fallen Man, by sending
his Son in our Nature to accomplish this Design.

And in the handling of this Argument I shall,
as I said before, all along take the express declarati-
ons or at least the pregnant intimations of Scripture
for my ground and guide, it being always safest to
take the Reasons of the Divine Counsels and Actions
from God himself: And in the

First, place, I make no manner of doubt to say,
that it would be a great presumption and boldness
in any Man to affirm, that the infinite Wisdom of
God could not have brought about the Salvation of
Men by any other way, than by this very way in
which he hath done it. For why should we take up-
on us to set limits to infinite Wisdom, and pretend
to know the utmost extent of it? But since God
hath been pleased to pitch upon this Way rather
than any other, this surely ought to be Reason enough
to satisfy us of the peculiar wisdom and fitness of it,
whether

SERM. whether the particular Reasons of it appear to us or
XLVI. not.

And yet it cannot be denied to be a very noble Argument, and well worthy our consideration to enquire into the Reasons of this dispensation, and to assign them particularly, if we can. For I look upon *Mysteries* and *Miracles* in Religion to be much of the same Nature, and that a great Reverence is due to both where they are certain, and necessary in the Nature and Reason of the thing, but neither of them are easily to be admitted without necessity, and very good evidence.

Secondly, I consider in the next place, that in the several Revelations which God hath made of himself to Mankind, he hath with great condescension accommodated himself, both as to the manner and degree of them, to the condition and capacity, and other circumstances of the Persons and People to whom they were made.

Particularly we find that the Dispensation of God towards the *Jewish Nation*; was full of condescension to the temper, and prejudices, and other circumstances of that *People*. For the *Religion* and *Laws* which God gave them were far from being the best and most perfect in themselves; in which Sense some understand that *Passage* in the Prophet *Ezekiel*, where it is said, that God gave them *Statutes which were not good*; that is, very imperfect in comparison of what he could and would have given them, had they been capable of them; and yet such as were very well suited and fitted to their present capacity and circumstances.

Thirdly, I observe yet further, that tho' the *Christian Religion*, as to the main and substance of it, be a most perfect Institution, being the *Law of Nature* reviv'd and perfected; yet upon a due consideration of things it cannot be denied that the manner and circumstances of this Dispensation are full of condescension to the weakness of Mankind, and very much accommodated to the most common

and deeply radicated Prejudices of Men concern-
ing God and Religion ; and peculiarly fitted to re-
move and root them out of the Minds of Men, by
substituting something in the place of them of as near
a compliance with them as was consistent with the
Honour of Almighty God, and the great Design
of the *Christian Religion*.

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It is not easy to give a certain account of the true
Original of some *Notions* and *Prejudices* concerning
God and Religion which have generally obtained in
the World in that variety of *Religions*, and the dif-
ferent ways of *Worship* and *Superstition* which have
been in several *Nations* of the Earth : But in *History*
and *Fact* this is certain, that some *Notions*, and those
very gross and erroneous, did almost universally
prevail even among those who did extremely differ
in the particular *Forms* and *Modes* of their *Super-*
stition.

And though some of these were much more tole-
rable than others, yet God seems to have had great
consideration of some very weak and gross appre-
hensions of Mankind concerning Religion. And as
in some of the *Laws* given by *Moses*, God was
pleased particularly to consider the *hardness* of the
hearts of that *People* ; so he seems likewise to have
very much suited the *Dispensation* of the *Gospel*
and the *Method* of our *Salvation*, by the *Incarnati-*
on and *Sufferings* of his *Son*, to the common Preju-
dices of Mankind ; especially of the *Heathen* World,
whose Minds were less prepared for this *Dispensation*
than the *Jews*, if we consider the *Light* and
Advantages which the *Jewish* Nation had above
the *Gentile* World : That so by this means and me-
thod he might wean them by degrees from their
gross conceptions of things, and rectify more easily
their wrong apprehensions by gratifying them in
some measure, and in a gracious compliance with
our weakness by bending and accommodating the
Way and *Method* of our *Salvation* to our weak *Capacity*
and imperfect *Conceptions* of things.

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Fourthly, And that God hath done this in the Dispensation of the Gospel will I think very plainly appear in the following Instances; in most of which I shall be very brief, and only insist somewhat more largely upon the last of them.

1st. The World was much given to admire *Mysteries* in Religion. The *Jews* had *theirs*; several of which by God's own appointment were reserv'd and kept secret in a great measure from the People; others were added by the Superstition of after-Ages, and held in equal or rather greater Veneration than the former: And the *Heathen* likewise had *theirs*; the *Devil* always affecting to imitate God so far as served his wicked and malicious design of seducing Mankind into *Idolatry* and the *Worship* of himself: And therefore the *Scripture* always speaks of the *Heathen Idolatry* as the *Worship* of *Devils*, and not of *God*: So that almost every *Nation* had their peculiar and celebrated *Mysteries*; most of which were either very odd and fantastical, or very lewd and impure, or very inhuman and cruel, and every way unworthy of the *Deity*.

But the great *Mystery* of the *Christian Religion*, the *Incarnation* of the *Son* of *God*; or, as the *Apostle* calls it, *God manifested in the flesh*; was such a *Mystery*, as for the greatness and wonderfulness, for the infinite mercy and condescension of it, did obscure and swallow up all other *Mysteries*. For which reason the *Apostle*, in allusion to the *Heathen Mysteries* and in contempt of them, speaking of the great *Mystery* of the *Christian Religion*, says, *1 Tim. 3. 16. without controversy great is the mystery of godliness, God was manifested in the flesh, &c.* Since the World had such an admiration for *Mysteries*, he instanceth in that which was a *Mystery* indeed; a *Mystery* beyond all dispute and beyond all comparison.

2^{dly}, There was likewise a great inclination in Mankind to the *Worship* of a *visible* and *sensible Deity*: And this was a main root and source of the various

5. *Method* in the
6. *Gospel* Dispensation
accommodated
to the Capacity
of Mankind
1. In *Mysteries*

no
2. *In a*
representation

rious

rious *Idolatries* in the *Heathen* World. Now to take SERM.
Men off from *this*, God was pleased to appear in our XLVI.
Nature; that they who were so fond of a *visible Deity* might have one to whom they might pay *Divine*
Worship without danger of *Idolatry*, and without injury to the *Divine Nature*: even a true and natural
Image of God the *Father*, the *Fountain* of the *Deity*; or, as the *Apostle* to the *Hebrews* describes the *Son of*
God, the resplendency or *brightness* of his *Father's* glory, and the *express* Character or *image* of his *person*,
Heb. 1. 2.

3dly, Another *Notion* which had generally obtained among Mankind, was concerning the *Expiation*
of the Sins of Men, and appeasing the offended *Deity* by *Sacrifice*, upon which they supposed the *punishment*
due to the *Sinner* was transferred, to exempt him from it: Especially by the *Sacrifices* of Men,
which had almost universally prevailed in the *Gentile* World.

And this *Notion* of the *Expiation* of *sin*, by *sacrifices* of one kind or other, seems to have obtained
very early in the World, and among all other ways of *Divine Worship* to have found the most universal
Reception in all Times and Places. And indeed a great part of the *Jewish* Religion and Worship was a
plain Condescension to the general apprehensions of Men concerning this way of appeasing the *Deity* by
Sacrifice: And the greatest part of the *Pagan* Religion and Worship was likewise founded upon the
same *Notion*, and Opinion, which because it was so universal, seems to have had its *Original* from the *first*
Parents of Mankind; either immediately after the *Creation*, or after the *Flood*; and from thence, I
mean as to the substance of this *Notion*, to have been derived and propagated to all their *Posterity*.

And with this general *Notion* of Mankind, whatever the ground and foundation of it might be, God
was pleased so far to comply, as once for all to have a general *Atonement* made for the *sins* of all Mankind

SERM. by the sacrifice of his only Son, whom his wise Prov.
 XLVI. dence did permit by wicked hands, to be crucified and
 slain. But I shall not at present insist any further upon
 this: which requires a particular Discourse by it self,
 and may by God's assistance in due time have it.

4thly, Another very common *Notion* and very rise
 in the *Heathen World*, and a great source of their
Idolatry, was their *Apotheoses* or *Canonizing* of fa-
 mous and eminent Persons, who in their Life-time
 had done great things and some way or other been
 great *Benefactors* to Mankind, by advancing them
 after their Death to the Dignity of an *inferior* kind of
Gods fit to be worshipped by Men here on *Earth*,
 and to have their *Prayers* and *Supplications* address'd
 to them as proper and powerful *Mediators* and Inter-
 cessors for them with the *superior Gods*: To these they
 gave the Titles of *Heroes* and *semi Dei*, that is, *half*
Gods: though the *Notion* of a *Being* that is just *half*
infinite seems to me very hard to be conceived and
 defin'd.

Now to take Men off from this kind of *Idolatry*,
 and to put an end to it, behold *One* in our *Nature*
exalted to the right hand of the Majesty on high, to be
 worshipped by Men and *Angels*: *One* that was the
 truly great *Benefactor* of Mankind: *One* that was
dead, and is alive again, and lives for ever more, to
make intercession for us.

5thly, To give but one *Instance* more which I have
 already intimated: The World was mightily bent
 upon addressing their requests and supplications,
 not to the *Deity* immediately, because their Supersti-
 tion thought that too great a presumption, but by
 some *Mediators* between the *Gods* and *them*, who
 might with advantage in this humble manner present
 their Requests so as to find acceptance. To this end
 they made use of the *Demons* or *Angels*, and of their
Heroes, or *Deified Men* whom I mentioned before,
 by whom they put up their Prayers to the *supreme*
Gods, hoping by their *Intercession*, and *Patronage*
 of

of their Cause, to obtain a gracious answer of them. SERM.
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In a gracious compliance with this common apprehension and thereby more easily and effectually to extirpate this sort of *Idolatry* which had been so long and so generally practised in the World, God was pleased to constitute and appoint *One* in our Nature to be a perpetual *Advocate* and *Intercessor* in Heaven for us, to offer up our *Prayers* to God his Father, and to obtain *mercy* for us, and *grace* to help in time of need. 1 Tim. 2. 5.

And for ever to take us off from all other *Mediators*, we are expressly told in *Scripture*, that as there is but *One God* to whom we are to pray, so there is but *one Mediator between God and Man, the Man Christ Jesus*, by whom we are to offer up our *Prayers* to God: And that we need not look out for any other, since the *Apostle* to the *Hebrews* tells us, that he is able to save to the uttermost all those that come to God by him, seeing he lives for ever to make intercession for us, Heb. 7. 25.

And for this reason the Church of *Rome* is altogether inexcusable in this Point, for introducing more *Mediators* and *Intercessors*, more *Patrons* and *Advocates* in Heaven for us: And this not only without any necessity, for who can add any virtue and efficacy to the powerful and prevalent Intercession of the *Son of God*? but likewise in direct contradiction to the express Constitution and appointment of God himself, who says, there is but *one Mediator between God and Man*, and they say there ought to be many more, not only the *Blessed Virgin* but all the *Saints* and *Angels* in Heaven. Besides, that by this very thing they revive one notorious Piece of the old *Pagan* Idolatry, which God so plainly design'd to extinguish by appointing *One* only *Mediator between God and Men*.

By this *Condescension* likewise God hath given us the comfortable assurance of a most powerful and a

SERM. perpetual *Intercessor* at the right hand of God in our
 XLVI. behalf. For if we consider *Christ* as *Man* and of
 the same *Nature* with us, *bone of our bone, and flesh*
of our flesh, so very nearly allied and related to us,
 we may easily believe, that he hath a most tender care
 and concernment for us; That he sincerely wisheth
 our happiness, and will by all means seek to procure
 it, if we our selves by our own wilful obstinacy do not
 hinder it, and resist the kindness and the counsel of God
against our selves: For if we be resolved to continue
 impenitent, there is no help for us; we must die in
 our Sins, and Salvation itself cannot save us.

But to proceed; it cannot surely but be matter
 of greatest consolation to us, that the *Man Christ*
Jesus who is now so highly exalted at the right hand of
 God, and who hath all power in Heaven and Earth
 committed to him, is our Patron and Advocate in Hea-
 ven to plead our Cause with God: Since we cannot
 but think, that He who was pleased to become Bro-
 ther to us all, does bear a true affection and good will to
 us: And that he who assumed our *Nature* will hearti-
 ly espouse our Cause, and plead it powerfully for us,
 and will with all possible advantage recommend our
 Petitions and Requests to God.

But then if we consider further, that he did not
 only take our *Nature*, but likewise took our *infirmi-*
ties and bore them many years, in which he had long
 and continual experience of the saddest sufferings to
 which human *Nature* is subject in this World, and
was tempted in all things like as we are: This gives us
 still greater assurance that he who suffer'd and was
 tempted himself cannot but be touch'd with a lively
 sense of our Infirmities, and must have learned by
 his own Sufferings to compassionate ours, and to be
 ready to succour us when we are tempted, and to af-
 ford us grace and help suitable to all our Wants and In-
 firmities: For nothing gives us so just a sense of the
 sufferings of others, as the remembrance of our own,
 and the bitter experience of the like sufferings and
 Temptations in our selves.

And

And this the *Apostle* to the *Hebrews* doth very par-
 ticularly insist upon as matter of greatest comfort and
 encouragement to us, that the *Son of God* did not on-
 ly assume our Nature, *but was made in all things like*
unto us, and during his abode here upon Earth did
 suffer and was tempted like as we are: For verily,
 says the *Apostle*, Heb. 2. 16, 17, 18. *he took not on*
him the nature of Angels, but of the seed of Abraham:
wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like un-
to his Brethren, that he might be a merciful and faith-
ful High-Priest in things pertaining to God: For in that
he himself suffer'd being tempted, he is able to succour
them that are tempted.

And again, exhorting the *Jews* who were newly
 converted to *Christianity*, to continue *steadfast in*
their profession, notwithstanding all the sufferings to
 which upon that account they were exposed; he
 comforts them with this consideration, that we have
 at the right hand of God so powerful an *Advocate* and
Intercessor for us as the *Son of God*, who is sensible of
 our Case, having suffered the same things Himself,
 and therefore we cannot doubt of his compassion to
 us, and readiness to support us in the like Sufferings:
 Heb. 4. 14, 15, 16. *Seeing then*, says he, *that we*
have a great High-Priest that is passed into the Heavens,
Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our Profession:
For we have not a High-Priest, that cannot be touched
with the feeling of our Infirmities, but was in all points
tempted like as we are, yet without Sin: From whence
 he concludes, that having such an *Intercessor* we may
 with great confidence and assurance address our Sup-
 plications to God for his mercy and help in all our
 wants and weakness, to supply the one, and to assist
 the other: *Let us therefore*, says he, *come boldly to the*
throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy and find
grace to help in time of need, χάρις υἱς ἐδουλοῦ βοηθεῖν, *grace*
for seasonable relief.

So that our *Blessed Saviour* and *Redeemer*, now that
 he is advanced to Heaven and exalted to the right

SERM. hand of God, is not unmindful of us in this height of
 XLVI. his Glory and Greatness; but with the and tenderest
 affection and compassion to Mankind doth still prosecute the Design of our Salvation; and in virtue of his meritorious Obedience and Sufferings, which he presents to God continually, he offers up our Prayers to Him, and pleads our Cause with him, and represents to him all our wants and necessities, and procures for us a favourable answer of our Prayers, and supplies of grace and strength proportionable to our temptations and infirmities.

And thus, by virtue of this prevalent *Intercession* of his with God for us, our *Sins* are forgiven, and our *Wants* supplied, and our *Requests* granted, and the gracious *assistance* and *supports* of God's *Holy Spirit* are seasonably afforded to us, and we are kept by the mighty power of God through Faith unto Salvation: In a word, all those *Blessings* and *Benefits* are procured for us by his *Intercession* in Heaven, which he purchased for us by his *Blood* upon Earth.

So that in this *Method* of our *Salvation*, besides many other gracious *Condescensions* which God hath made to the *weakness* and *Prejudices* of Mankind, our *Blessed Saviour* hath perfectly supplied the *two* great *Wants* concerning which Mankind was at so great a loss before, *namely* the *Want* of an effectual *Expiatory Sacrifice* for *Sin* upon *Earth*, and of a prevalent *Mediator* and *Intercessor* with God in *Heaven*.

And he hath in great Goodness and Condescension to our inveterate *Prejudices* concerning these things, taken effectual care fully to supply both these *Wants*; having appeared in the end of the *World* to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself; and in virtue of that *Sacrifice* appearing now in *Heaven* in the presence of God for us, he is become our perpetual *Advocate* and a most prevalent *Intercessor* with God on our behalf.

For instead of the various and endless *Sacrifices* of the *Jews* and *Heathens*, the *Son* of God hath by one sacrifice for sins perfected for ever them that are sanctified: And instead of the *Mediation*

diation of Demons and Hero's, to offer up our SERM.
 Prayers to God, which were the *Intercessors* made use XLVI.
 of among the *Heathen*, we have one *Mediator between*
 God and men, appointed by God himself, even the Son
 of God, who is entered into Heaven itself there to ap-
 pear in the presence of God for us: And to assure us
 that he commiserates our Case, and hath a true and
 tender sense of our Infirmities and Sufferings, the ve-
 ry manner of his *Intercession* for us, as the *Scripture* re-
 presents it to us, is a plain Demonstration of the thing:
 For he intercedes for us in Heaven by representing to
 God his Father his sufferings upon Earth; and plead-
 ing them in our behalf: So that the very Argument
 which he useth to God for us cannot but stir up compas-
 sion in him towards us, and whilst he represents his
 Own Sufferings in our behalf, we cannot think that
 he is unmindful and insensible of Ours.

You see then that in this *Dispensation* of God for our
 Salvation, by sending his Son in our Nature, things
 that are not only suited in great *condescension* to our
apprehensions, but are likewise in great compassion to
 us every way fitted for our comfort and encourage-
 ment. God hath made him our great *Patron* and *Ad-
 vocate* who was our *Sacrifice* and *Propitiation*. And
 surely we have all the reason in the World to believe,
 that he who in the days of his flesh humbled himself
 and became obedient to the death for our sakes, will
 be ready to do us all good offices now that he is ad-
 vanced to the right hand of God; that he who died
 for us upon Earth, now that he lives again, will
 make intercession for us in Heaven, and perfect that
 Salvation which he purchased for us upon the Cross.

And therefore we find in *Scripture*, that as the *pur-
 chasing* of our Salvation is ascribed to the *Death* and
Sufferings of Christ, so the *perfecting* of it is attribu-
 ted to his *Intercession* for us at the right hand of his
 Father: Wherefore, says the *Apostle* to the *Hebrews*,
 he is able to save to the uttermost all those that come to
 God by him, seeing he liveth for ever to make *In-
 tercession* for us: He dyed once to purchase these bene-
 fits,

SERM. fits, *but he lives for ever* to procure them for us, and
 XLVI. to apply them to us: And now that he is in Heaven,
 he is as intent upon our Concernment, and lays our
 Happiness as much to Heart as when he dwelt here
 among us on Earth, and poured out his Blood a
 Sacrifice for Sin upon the Cross: And that when he
 lived here below he suffer'd and was tempted as we
 are; this very Consideration gives us the greatest
 assurance possible that he is still touched with the feel-
 ing of our Infirmities, and hath a lively sense of our
 Sufferings; and consequently, that he doth compas-
 sionate our Case and will use all his power and inte-
 rest for our advantage, for our reasonable support
 and succour in all our trials and sufferings. But be-
 sides the wonderful *Condescension* of this *Dispensation*,
 there is likewise in the

Fifth and last place, a great *Congruity* and *fitness*
 in the thing itself; and this *Method* of our Salvation
 which the Wisdom of God hath pitched upon is in
 many other respects very much for our real Benefit
 and Comfort. For by this means we have a perfect
 and familiar *Example* of holiness and obedience in
 our own Nature, by which we plainly see, that God
 requires nothing of us, but what he himself when he
 submitted to become Man did think fit to do: For
being made of a Woman, he was of necessity *made un-
 der the Law*, and by assuming *human Nature* he be-
 came naturally subject to the *Laws* and conditions of
 his Being.

And here likewise is a provision made for the *Expi-
 ation* and *Forgiveness* of our *Sins*, in a way not only
 very honourable to the Justice of God and the Au-
 thority of his Laws, but likewise very effectual to
 discountenance Sin and to deter Men from it; since
 God did not think fit to forgive the Sins of Men
 without great Sufferings, and that in our Nature:
 For though God was willing to save the Sinner, yet
 rather than encouragement should be given to Sin by
 letting it go unpunish'd, he was contented to give
 up

up the dearly beloved of his soul to be a sacrifice and propitiation for the Sins of the whole World. SERM. XLVI.

By the same means also we have a most powerful Antidote against the fear of Suffering, and particularly against the Fear of Death, one of the greatest slaveries of human Nature: So also the Apostle to the Hebrews tells us, *Heb. 2. 14, 15. that for this cause Christ himself also took part of flesh and blood, that by death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and might deliver those who through fear of death were all their life-time subject to bondage.*

Again, we have hereby full assurance of a blessed Immortality in another Life, because in our Nature Death and all the Powers of Darknes were baffled and overcome. The Death of Christ, which could not have been without his *Incarnation*, and likewise his *Resurrection* from the dead, and his *Ascension* into Heaven, are sensible Demonstrations to all Mankind of a blessed *Immortality* after Death; which is the most powerful motive in the World to Obedience and a holy Life.

And lastly, We may upon this account promise to ourselves a fair and equal Trial at the Judgment of the Great Day, because we shall then be judged by a Man like ourselves. Our Saviour and Judge himself hath told us that for this reason God hath committed all Judgment to the Son, because he is the Son of Man. And this in human Judgments is accounted a great Privilege, to be judged by those who are of the same Rank and Condition with ourselves, and who are likely to understand best and most carefully to examine and consider all our circumstances, and to render our Case as if it were their own.

So equitably doth God deal with us, that we shall be acquitted or condemned by such a Judge as according to human measures we ourselves should have chosen; by One in our own Nature who was made in all things like unto us, that only excepted which would have rendered him incapable of being our Judge, because it would have made him a Criminal like

SERM. like ourselves. And therefore the Apostle offers this
 XLVI. as a firm ground of assurance to us that *God will judge*
 the *World in Righteousness*, because this Judgment
 shall be administred by a *Man* like ourselves; *He*
hath, saith he, *appointed a day wherein he will judge*
the World in Righteousness, by that Man whom he hath
ordained, &c.

I shall now only make a practical *Inference* or two
 from what hath been delivered upon this Argument,
 and so conclude the whole *Discourse*.

Inference
First, The serious consideration of what hath
 been said concerning the *Incarnation* of our *Blessed*
Saviour should effectually prevail with us to comply
 with the great End and Design of the *Son of God's*
 becoming *Man* and *dwelling amongst us*, and of his
 doing and suffering all those things which are record-
 ed of him in the *History* of his *Life* and *Death* written
 by the *Holy Evangelists*: I say, the consideration
 hereof should persuade us all to comply with the
 great Design of all this, which is the *Reformation*
 of Mankind and the *Recovery* of us out of that sin-
 ful and miserable estate into which we were fallen:
 Because the *Salvation* which the *Son of God* hath pur-
 chased for us, and which he offers to us by the *Gos-
 pel*, is not to be accomplished and brought about any
 other way than by forsaking our sins and reforming
 our *Lives*. *The Grace of God, which hath appeared*
to all Men and brings Salvation, will not make us par-
 takers of it any other way, nor by any other means,
 than by *teaching us to deny all ungodliness and worldly*
lusts, and to live soberly and righteously, and godly in
this present world. *God sent his Son Jesus to bless us,*
by turning us away every one from his iniquities; and
 unless this change be effectually wrought in us, we
 are utterly incapable of all the Blessings of the *Gospel*
 of *Christ*. All that he hath done for us *without us*
 will avail us nothing, unless we be *inwardly* trans-
 formed and *renewed in the spirit of our minds*; unless
 we become *new Creatures*, unless we make it the
 continual

continual and sincere endeavour of our lives to keep SERM.
the Commandments of God. XLVI.

For the *Scripture* is most expresse and positive in this matter; *Heb. 12. 14.* That *without Holiness no Man shall see the Lord*: *1 Joh. 3. 3.* That *every Man that hath this hope in Him*, that is, in *Christ*, to be saved by *Him*, must *purify himself even as he is pure*. We do not rightly and truly believe that *Jesus Christ came into the World to save Sinners*, if we be not also thoroughly convinc'd that it is as necessary for us to leave our Sins, as to believe this most faithful and credible *Saying*.

The Obedience and Sufferings of our *Blessed Saviour* are indeed accounted to us for *Righteousness*, and will most certainly redound to our unspeakable benefit and advantage upon our performance of the *Condition* which the *Gospel* doth require on our Part, namely, that *every man that names the Name of Christ depart from iniquity*: And the *Grace of God's Holy Spirit* is ready to enable us to perform this *Condition*, if we earnestly ask it, and do sincerely co-operate with it: Provided we do what we can on our part, God will not be wanting to us on his. But if we receive the *Grace of God in vain*, and take no care to perform the *Condition*, and do neglect to implore the *Grace and Assistance of God's Holy Spirit* to that purpose, we have none to blame but ourselves; because it is then wholly our own fault if we fall short of that *Happiness* which *Christ* hath purchased, and promised to us upon such easy and reasonable *Conditions* as the *Gospel* proposeth.

But I no where find that God hath promised to force *Happiness* upon the negligent, and a *Reward* upon the *wicked and slothful servant*: A *Gift* may be given for nothing, but surely a *Reward* does in the very nature of it always suppose some *Service*. None but a *righteous Man* is capable of a *righteous Man's Reward*: And *St. John* hath sufficiently caution'd us not to think ourselves *Righteous*, unless we be *doers of righteousness*: *Little children*, says he, *1 John 3. 7.*
let

SERM. *let no man deceive you, he that doth righteousness is*
 XLVI. *righteous, even as He is righteous.* This is so very
 plain a *Text*, that if Men were not either very easy to
 be deceived by others, or very willing to deceive them-
 selves, they could not possibly mistake the meaning
 of it: And therefore I will repeat it once more:
Little children, let no man deceive you, he that doth
righteousness is righteous, even as He is righteous.

Secondly, The other *Inference* which I would make
 from the precedent *Discourse* is this, That with all
 possible thankfulness we should acknowledge and a-
 dore the wonderful Goodness and Condescension of
 Almighty God in sending his *only begotten Son* into
 the World in our Nature to be *made flesh*, and to
dwell amongst us in order to our Recovery and Salva-
 tion: A Method and Dispensation not only full of
 mercy and goodness, but of great Condescension to
 our meanness, and of mighty virtue and efficacy for
 our Redemption and Deliverance from the Guilt
 and Dominion of Sin; and upon all accounts every
 way so much for our benefit and advantage. So that
 well may we say with St. Paul, *This is a faithful*
Saying, πιστός λόγος, a credible Word, and *worthy of*
all acceptation, that is, fit to be embraced and enter-
 tained with all possible Joy and Thankfulness, *That*
Jesus Christ came into the World to save Sinners.

What an everlasting Fountain of the most invalu-
 able Blessings and Benefits to Mankind is the Incar-
 nation of the Son of God? His vouchsafing to assume
 our Nature, and to reside and converse so long with
 us? And what are we, that the eternal and *only be-*
gotten Son of God should condescend to do all this for
 us? That the High and glorious Majesty of Hea-
 ven should stoop down to the Earth, and be content-
 ed to be cloathed with Misery and Mortality? That
 he should submit to so poor and low a Condition, to
 such dreadful and disgraceful Sufferings for our sakes?
 For what are *We*? vile and despicable Creatures,
 guilty and unworthy Offenders and Apostates, Ene-
 mies and Rebels. Blessed God! how great is thy
 Goodness?

Goodness? how infinite are thy tender Mercies and SERM.
Compassions to Mankind? That thou should'st re- XLVI.
gard us whilst we neglected thee, and remember us
in our low Condition, when we had *forgotten thee*
days without number, and should'st take such pity on
us when we shew'd none to ourselves; and whilst we
were thy declared and implacab'e Enemies, should'st
expres more kindness and good-will to us, than the
best of Men ever did to their best Friends.

When we reflect seriously upon those great things
which God hath done in our behalf, and consider
that mighty Salvation which God hath wrought for
us; what thanks can we possibly render, what ac-
knowledgments shall we ever be able to make, I do
not say equal but in any wise meet and becoming, to
this great Benefactor of Mankind? Who when we
had so highly offended and provok'd Him, and so
foolishly and so fatally undone ourselves; when we
were become so guilty and so miserable, and so much
fitter to have eternally been the objects of his wrath
and indignation than of his pity and compassion,
was pleas'd to send his *own*, his *only Son* into the
World to *seek and save us*; and by him to repair all
our ruins, to *forgive all our iniquities*, to *heal all our*
spiritual diseases, and to *crown us with loving-kind-*
ness and tender mercies.

And what Sacrifices of Praise and Thanksgiving
should we also offer up to this gracious and most
merciful Redeemer of ours, *the everlasting Son of the*
Father, who debased himself so infinitely for our
sakes, and *when he took upon him to deliver Man did*
not abhor the Virgin's Womb: Who was contented
to be born so obscurely, and to live all his life in a
poor and persecuted condition; and was pleased both
to undergo and to *overcome the sharpness of Death*,
that he might open the Kingdom of Heaven to all Be-
lievers?

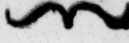
Every time we have occasion to meditate upon
this, especially when we are communicating at his
Holy Table, and receiving the blessed Symbols and
Pledges

SERM. *Pledges of his precious Death and Passion; How*
 XLVI. *should our hearts burn within us and leap for Joy?*

How should the remembrance of it revive and raise our Spirits, and put us into an Extasy of Love and Gratitude to this great *Friend and Lover of Souls?* And with the *Bless'd Mother of our Lord*, how should our Souls, upon that blessed occasion, *magnify the Lord, and our Spirits rejoice in God our Saviour?*

The Holy Men of old were transported with Joy at the obscure and confused apprehension and remote foresight of so great a Blessing, at so great a distance: It is said of *Abraham, the Father of the faithful, that he saw his Day afar off, and was glad.* How should we then be affected with Joy and Thankfulness, to whom the *Son of God and Blessed Saviour of Men* is actually come? He is come many ages ago, and hath enlightned a great part of the World with his Glory. Yea, he is come to *us*, who were in a manner separated from the rest of the World: To *Us* is this great *Light* come, who had so long *sat in Darknes and in the shadow of Death*: And this mighty *Salvation* which he hath wrought for *us* is near to every one of us that is willing to lay hold of it, and to accept it upon those gracious terms and conditions upon which it is offer'd to us in his *Holy Gospel*.

And by his *Coming* he hath delivered Mankind from that gross Ignorance and *thick Darknes* which covered the Nations: And we know that the *Son of God* is come, and hath given us an understanding to know him that is true: 1 John 1. 20. And we are in him that is true, even in his *Son Jesus Christ*: 1 John 1. 21. This is the true God and eternal Life. And then it immediately follows, *Little Children, keep yourselves from Idols.* What can be the meaning of this Caution? and what is the Connection of it with the foregoing Discourse? It is plainly this, That the *Son of God* by his coming had rescued Mankind from the sottish Worship of *Idols*; and therefore he cautions *Christians* to take great heed of relapsing into

into *Idolatry* by worshipping a *Creature*, or the *Image* SERM.
and likeness of any *Creature* instead of *God*. And XLVI.
because he foresaw that it might be objected to 
Christians, as in fact it was afterwards by the *Hea-*
then, that the *Worship* of *Christ*, who was a *Man*,
was as much *Idolatry* as that which the *Christians*
charged the *Heathens* withal: Therefore *St. John*
effectually to prevent the force of this plausible *Ob-*
jection, though he perpetually, throughout his *Gos-*
pel declares *Christ* to be really a *Man*, yet he ex-
pressly also affirms him to be *God*, and the *true God*;
and consequently, *Christians* might safely pay *Di-*
vine Worship to *him* without fear or danger of *Ido-*
latry: *We are in him that is true, even in his Son*
Jesus Christ: This is the true God and eternal Life:
Little Children, keep yourselves from Idols.

But this I am sensible is a *Digression*, yet such a
one as may not be altogether useless.

To proceed then in the recital of those great *Bles-*
sings which the *Coming* of the *Son of God* hath
brought to *Mankind*. He hath rescued us from
the bondage of *Sin*, and from the slavery of *Satan*:
He hath openly proclaimed *Pardon* and *Reconcilia-*
tion to the *World*: He hath clearly revealed *eternal*
Life to us, which was but obscurely made known
before, both to *Jews* and *Gentiles*; but is now made
manifest by the appearance of our *Lord and Saviour Je-*
sus Christ, who hath abolished death, and brought life
and immortality to light by the *Gospel*: He hath pur-
chased this great *Blessing* for us; and is ready to
confer it upon us, if we will be contented to leave
our *Sins* and to be saved by *Him*: A condition
without which as *Salvation* is not to be had, so if
it were, it would not be desirable, it could not
make us happy; because our *Sins* would still sepa-
rate between *God* and us, and the guilt and horror
of our own minds would make us eternally mis-
erable.

And now surely we cannot but thus judge, that all
the *Praises* and *Acknowledgments*, all the *Service*

SERM. and Obedience which we can possibly render to
 XLVI. him, are infinitely beneath those infinite Obligations
 which the *Son of God* hath laid upon the Sons of
 Men by his *Coming into the world to save Sinners*.

What then remains, but that at all times, and more especially at this *Season*, we gratefully acknowledge and joyfully commemorate this great and amazing Goodness of God to us, in the *Incarnation* of his *Son* for the Redemption and Salvation of the sinful and miserable Race of Mankind? A Method and Dispensation of the Divine Grace and Wisdom, not only full of mercy and condescension, but of great power and virtue to purify our Hearts and to reform our Lives; to beget in us a fervent love of *God our Saviour*, and a perfect hatred and detestation of our Sins, and a stedfast purpose and resolution to lead a new Life, following the Commandments of God, and walking in his ways all the days of our Life. In a word, a Method that is every way calculated for our unspeakable Benefit and Comfort.

Since then the *Son of God* hath so graciously condescended to be *made in all things like unto us, sin only excepted*; let us aspire to be as like to Him as is possible in the exemplary Holiness and Virtues of his Life. We cannot be like Him in his Miracles, but we may in his Mercy and Compassion: We cannot imitate his Divine Power, but we may resemble Him in his Innocency and Humility, in his Meekness and Patience. And as He assumed human Nature, so let us re-assume Humanity which we have in great measure depraved and put off; and let us *put on bowels of mercy* towards those that are in misery, and be ready to relieve the poor for *His sake, who being rich, for our sakes became poor, that we through his poverty might be made rich*.

To conclude, Let us imitate *Him* in *that* which was his great Work and Business here upon Earth, and which of all other did best become the *Son of God*; I mean, in His *going about doing good*: That
 by

by giving glory to God in the highest, and by endeavouring as much as in us lies, to procure and promote peace on earth, and good will amongst men, we may at last be made meet to be made partakers of the inheritance of the Saints in Light: Thro' the Mercies and Merits of our blessed Saviour and Redeemer. Amen.

Almighty God, who hast given us thy only begotten Son to take our Nature upon him, and as at this Time to be born of a pure Virgin: Grant that we being regenerate and made thy Children by Adoption and Grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit; through the same our Lord Jesus Christ, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the same Spirit, ever one God, world without end. Amen.

SERMON XLVII.

Concerning the Sacrifice and Satisfaction of Christ, &c.

✧ HEB. ix. 26.

But now once hath he appeared in the end of the World, to take away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself.

AMong many other great Ends and Reasons SERM. for which God was pleased to send his Son XLVII into the World to dwell amongst us, this was one of the chief, that by a long course of the greatest innocency and the greatest sufferings in our Nature he might be capable to make a perfect Expiation of Sin: *But now once in the end of the World, ἐν συντελείᾳ τῶν αἰώνων*, in the conclusion of the Ages, that is, in the last Age of the World, which is the Gospel Age, hath he appeared to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

[H 2]

The

SERM. The general Design of God in the sending his
 XLVII Son into the World was to save Mankind from eternal death and misery, and to purchase for us eternal life and happiness. So the Author of our Salvation himself tells us, *John 3. 16. That God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.*

Now in order to the procuring of this Salvation for us, the impediments and hindrances of it were to be removed: These were the *guilt*, and the *dominion* of Sin. By the *guilt* of Sin we were become obnoxious to the wrath of God and to eternal condemnation, and by the *defilement* and *dominion* of it we were incapable of the happiness of Heaven and the reward of eternal life.

To remove these two great Hindrances, two things were necessary: The Forgiveness of sins past in order to our deliverance from the wrath of God and the eternal torments of the next Life; and the Reformation of our hearts and lives to make us capable of eternal Life and Happiness in another World. And both these, if God had so pleased, might, for any thing we certainly know to the contrary, have been effected by the abundant mercy and powerful grace of God, without this wonderful method and dispensation of sending his Son in our Nature *to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself*: But it seems the wisdom of God thought fit to pitch upon this way and method of our Salvation, and no doubt for very good *Reasons*; amongst which these *three* seem to be very obvious and very considerable.

First, To vindicate the honour of his Laws, which if Sin had gone altogether unpunish'd would have been in great danger of falling into contempt. For if God had proclaimed a general Pardon of Sin to all Mankind without any testimony of his wrath and displeasure against it, who would have had any great veneration for his Laws, or have believed in good earnest, that the violation of them had either
 been

been so extremely offensive to him, or so very dangerous to the Sinner? SERM.
XLVII

Therefore to maintain the honour of his Laws, rather than Sin should pass unpunished, God would lay the punishment of it upon his only begotten Son, the dearest Person to him in the World: Which is a greater testimony of his high displeasure against Sin, and of his tender regard and concernment for the honour of his Laws, than if the Sinner had suffered the punishment due to it in his own person.

Secondly, Another Reason of this Dispensation, and that likewise very considerable, was, that God might forgive Sin in such a way as yet effectually to discountenance and discourage it, and to create in us the greatest horror and hatred of it: Which could not have been by an absolute Pardon, without any punishment inflicted, or satisfaction made to the honour of his Justice. For had Sin been so easily forgiven, who would have been sensible of the great evil of it, or afraid to offend for the future?

But when God makes his own Son a Sacrifice, and lays upon him the punishment due for the Iniquities of us all, this is a demonstration that God hates Sin as much, if it be possible, as he loved his own Son. For this plainly shews what Sin deserves, and what the Sinner may justly expect, if after this severity of God against it he will venture to commit it.

And if this Sacrifice for Sin, and the Pardon purchased by it, be not effectual to reclaim us from Sin, and to beget in us an eternal dread and detestation of it: If we sin wilfully after so clear a Revelation of the *wrath of God from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of Men*, there remains *no more sacrifice for sin, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation to consume the adversaries*. For what could God do more to testify his displeasure against sin, and to discountenance the practice of it, than to make his only Son an Offering for Sin, and to give him up to be wounded for our Transgressions,

SERM. and bruised for our Iniquities? In what clearer Glass
 XLVII can we at once behold the great evil and demerit of
 Sin, and the infinite goodness and mercy of God to
 Sinners, than in the sorrows and sufferings of the
 Son of God for our Sins and for our sakes?

Thirdly, Another Reason of this Dispensation seems to have been a gracious condescension and compliance of Almighty God with a certain apprehension and persuasion, which had very early and universally obtained among Mankind, concerning the Expiation of Sin and appeasing the offended Deity by Sacrifices of living Creatures, of Birds and Beasts; and afterwards by human Sacrifices and *the blood of their Sons and Daughters*: by offering to God, as the expression is in the *Prophet*, *their first-born for their transgression, and the fruit of their body for the sin of their souls*.

And this Notion of the expiation of Sin by Sacrifice, whether it had its first Rise from *Divine Revelation* and was afterwards propagated from Age to Age by *Tradition*: I say, from whence soever this Notion came, it hath of all other Notions concerning Religion, excepting those of the *Being* of God and his *Providence*, and of the *Recompences* of another *Life*, found the most universal reception, and the thing hath been the most generally practised in all Ages and Nations, not only in the *old*, but in the *new* discovered parts of the World.

And indeed a very great part of the *Jewish* Religion, which was instituted by God himself, seems to have been a plain condescension to the general Apprehension of Mankind, concerning this way of appeasing the offended Deity by Sacrifices: As it was also a Figure of that great and efficacious Sacrifice which should in due time be offered to God to make atonement once for all the Sins of Mankind.

And the *Apostle* to the *Hebrews* doth very particularly insist upon this condescension of God to them in the Dispensation of the Gospel: and whereas they apprehended so great a necessity of a *High-Priest* and of *Sacrifices* to make expiation for the sins of
 the

the People, that it was an establish'd Principle a-SERM.
among them, that *without shedding of Blood there was XLVII*
no remission of Sins; God was pleased to comply so
far with these Notions and Apprehensions of theirs
as to make his own Son both a *Priest* and a *Sacrifice*,
to do that once for all which their own *Higb-Priest*
pretended to do *year by year*.

And from hence the same *Apostle* takes occasion
to recommend to them the *new Covenant* and *Dis-*
penfation of the *Gospel*, as having a greater and more
perfect *Higb-Priest* and a more excellent *Sacrifice*,
than were the *Higb-Priests* and the *Sacrifices* under
the *Law*; the *Son of God* having by one *Sacrifice* of
himself obtained eternal *Redemption* for us, and per-
fected for ever them that are sanctified.

And this Apprehension prevailed no less in the
Heathen World, and proceeded to the *Sacrifices* of
Men, even of their *first-born*. And with this Ap-
prehension, not to countenance but to abolish it,
God was pleased to comply so far as to make a ge-
neral Atonement for the Sins of Mankind by the
Death of his Son, appearing in our Nature to be-
come a voluntary *Sacrifice* for us: God permitting
him to be unjustly put to death, and his Blood to be
shed by the malice of Men, in appearance as a Male-
factor, but in truth as a Martyr; and accepting of
his Death as a meritorious *Sacrifice* and *propitiation*
for the *Sins of the whole World*: That by this wise
counsel and permission of his providence he might
for ever put an end to that barbarous and inhuman
way of serving God which had been so long in use
and practice among them. The Son of God by the
voluntary *Sacrifice* of himself having effected all that
at once, and for ever, which Mankind from the
beginning of the World had in vain been endeavour-
ing to accomplish by innumerable and continual Sa-
crifices; namely the pardon of their Sins, and per-
fect Peace and Reconciliation with God.

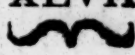
For these Ends and Reasons, and perhaps for ma-
ny more as great and considerable as these, which

SERM. our shallow Understandings are not able to fathom,
 XLVII the Wisdom of God hath pitched upon this way and
 method of delivering Mankind from the Guilt and
 dominion of Sin by the Sacrifice of his Son. And to
 this end it was requisite that he should appear in our
 Nature and dwell amongst us for some considerable
 time, that by a long course of the greatest Innocen-
 cy and of the greatest Sufferings in our Nature he
 might be capable of making a perfect expiation of
 Sin.

So that *two* things were requisite to qualify him
 for this purpose; perfect *Innocency* and *Obedience*,
 and great *Sufferings* in our Nature even to the suf-
 fering of Death. Both these the *Scripture* declares to
 be necessary qualifications of a person capable to make
 expiation of Sin; and both these were found in the
 Person of our *Blessed Saviour*.

First, unspotted *Innocency* and perfect *Obedience*.
 This the *Scripture* testifies concerning Him, and the
 whole course of his Life and Actions. Heb. 4. 15.
He was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without
Sin, saith the *Apostle* to the *Hebrews*. Joh. 8. 29.
He always did the things which pleased God, as he testi-
 fies concerning himself, and we are sure that his wit-
 ness is true. 1 Pet. 2. 22. *He did no Sin neither was*
guile found in his mouth, as St. Peter tells us of Him.
 And this was necessary to qualify him for the perfect
 Expiation of Sin, whether we consider Him as a
Priest, or as a *Sacrifice*.

As a *Priest*, he could not have been fit to make
 expiation for the Sins of others, had he not been
 without Sin himself. And this the *Apostle* tells us, is
 one great advantage of our *High-Priest* under the
Gospel, above the *High-Priest* under the *Law*, who
 being a Sinner himself, as well as those for whom
 he offer'd, had need to offer for himself before he
 could make so much as a Legal Expiation for the
 Sins of others: But a perfect and effectual Expiation of
 Sin, so as to purge the Conscience from the Guilt of
 it, cannot be made but by an *High-Priest* who

is holy and innocent himself; Heb. 7. 26, 27. For **SERM.**
such an High-Priest, saith the Apostle, *became us*, **XLVII**
 that is, now under the Dispensation of the Gospel, 
 when a perfect Expiation of Sins is to be made, *such*
an High-Priest is necessary, *as is holy, harmless, un-*
defiled, separate from sinners, who needs not as those
High-Priests, that is, as the High-Priests under the
 Law, *to offer up sacrifice first for his own sins, and*
then for the People: The plain force of which Argu-
 ment is this, that he who will be qualified to make
 atonement for the Sins of others must be without sin
 himself.

And then, if we consider *Christ* as a *Sacrifice* for
 Sin, perfect holiness is necessary to make a Sacrifice
 acceptable and available for the expiation of Sin.
 The necessity was typified by the quality of the *expi-*
atory Sacrifices under the *Law*: the *Beasts* that were
 to be offered were to be *without spot and blemish*. To
 which the Apostle alludes speaking of the quality and
 efficacy of the Sacrifice of *Christ*: Heb. 9. 14. *How*
much more, says he, *shall the Blood of Christ, who*
through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot to
God, purge your consciences from dead works to serve
the living God? And to the same purpose St. Peter,
 1 Pet. 1. 18, 19. *Forasmuch as ye know ye were*
not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and
gold, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a
Lamb without blemish and without spot, &c. Hereby
 intimating, that nothing less than the perfect inno-
 cency and holiness of him who was to be a Sacrifice
 for us could have expiated the guilt of our sins, and
 purchased eternal Redemption for us.

Secondly, Great *Sufferings* likewise in our Nature,
 even to the suffering of Death, were requisite to the
 perfect expiation of Sin: I say, even to the suffering
 of Death. For the Sacrifices which were to make
 expiation, were to be slain. And it was a constant
Maxim and principle among the *Jews*, and the *A-*
postle more than once in this *Epistle* seems to allow
 and

SERM. and confirm it, that *without shedding of blood there XLVII is no remission of sins.*

Not that God could not have pardoned Sin without satisfaction made to his Justice, either by the suffering of the Sinner himself, or of a Sacrifice in his stead: But according to the Method and Dispensation which the Wisdom of God had pitched upon, he was resolved not to dispense Forgiveness in any other way. For which reason he seems either to have possess'd Mankind with this *Principle*, or to have permitted them to be so persuaded, that *Sin was not to be expiated but by Blood*, that is, either by the Death of the Sinner or of the Sacrifice.

Now the Life of our *Blessed Saviour*, as well as his Death, was made up of Sufferings of one kind or other: Continual Sufferings from his Cradle to his Cross, from the time he drew his first Breath to his giving up the Ghost: And not only continual Sufferings, but the greatest that ever were, considering the Dignity of the Person that suffered, and the nature of the Sufferings: Considering likewise that these Sufferings were not only wholly undeserved on his part, but unmerited also on ours, for whose sake he submitted himself to them: Nay, on the contrary, he had obliged to the utmost those for whom and by whom he suffered, and continued still to oblige them by the greatest Blessings and Benefits purchased and procured for them by those very Sufferings which with so much Malice and Cruelty they inflicted on him.

Had our *Blessed Saviour* been a mere Man, the perfect Innocency and unspotted Purity of his whole Life; his Zeal to do the Will of God, and his delight in doing it; his infinite pains and unwearied diligence in *going about doing good*: His constant Obedience to God in the most difficult Instances, and his perseverance in well-doing, notwithstanding the ill usage and hard measure, the bitter reproaches and Persecutions he met withal for it, from a wicked and ill-natured World: His perfect submission to the

Will

Will of God, his invincible Patience under the SERM. greatest and bitterest Sufferings, and his infinite Charity to his Enemies and Persecutors: These must needs be highly acceptable to God, and if Man could merit of God, like by enough to be available for the Sins of others. XLVII

But our *Saviour* and our *Sacrifice* being the *Son of God* in our Nature; and he voluntarily assuming it, and submitting to the condition of Humanity in its lowest and most miserable state, Sin only accepted; and his being contented to live a Life of doing good and suffering evil, and at last to be put to Death and slain a Sacrifice for us: The Dignity of the Person who did and suffered all this for us, and his dear-ness to God, must needs add a mighty value to so perfect an Obedience and such patient Sufferings; so as to render them a full, perfect and sufficient Sacrifice, Oblation and Satisfaction for the Sins of the whole World.

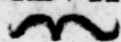
And all this being willingly performed in our Nature, and accepted by God as done upon our account, may reasonably be presumed to redound to our benefit and advantage, as much as if we our selves had performed it in our own Persons: Nothing being so proper and so available to make an *honourable amends* and satisfaction to the Justice of God for the Sins of all Mankind, as the voluntary Obedience and Sufferings of Human Nature in a Person of so great Dignity and dear-ness to God as his eternal and entirely beloved Son.

Now that expiation of Sin was made by the sufferings of *Christ* in our stead, I shall endeavour to make good these *three* ways.

First, From plain Testimonies of *Holy Scripture*, declaring this matter to us as clearly and fully as it is possible for words to do it.

Secondly, From the nature and intention of *Expiatory Sacrifices*, both among the *Jews* and *Heathens*; to which the Death of *Christ* is in the *New Testament* so

SERM. so frequently compared, and in point of virtue and
 XLVII efficacy to take away Sin infinitely preferred to it.

 Thirdly, By vindicating this Method and Dispensation of the Divine Willdom from the Objections which are brought against it; and by showing that there is nothing in it that is unreasonable, or any wise unworthy of God.

I. I shall produce some plain Testimonies of Holy Scripture, which declare this matter as clearly and fully as it is possible for words to do it; namely, that the *Son of God*, in order to the effectual *Expiation* of Sin, suffered in our stead, and bore the wrath of God for us, and made a perfect Atonement for Sin, and obtained eternal Redemption for us.

This the *Scripture* declares to us in great variety of expressions; as, that *Christ died for us*, and for our *Sins*; that he was a *sacrifice for us*, and a *propitiation for the sins of the whole World*; that is, of all Mankind; that *he bare our sins in his own body on the Tree*, and *appeared to take away sin by the sacrifice of himself*; that *we are justified in his blood*, and *redeemed by the price of it*; and in very many other expressions to the same purpose.

And this is so evidently the scope and meaning of these Expressions, that it cannot be denied without offering the greatest violence imaginable to the *Holy Scriptures*. For can any man think that God would have used so many expressions in *Scripture*, the plain and most obvious sense of all which is, that the *Son of God* suffered for our Sins and in our stead, if this had not been his design and meaning? Would not this be in effect to say, that God had written a great Book to puzzle and confound, but not to instruct and teach Mankind?

I will at present single out some few of those many *Texts of Scripture* which might be produced to this purpose: 2 Cor. 5. 21. *He hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin*; that is, he hath made him who had no Sin himself a Sacrifice for our sins. Again; Eph. 5. 10. *and walk in love, as Christ also*
hath

both loved us, and given himself for us, an offering and SERM.
 a sacrifice to God. St. Peter to the same purpose tells us, XLVII
 that Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for
 the unjust, that he might bring us to God, being put to
 death in the flesh: 1 Pet. i. 18. Here Christ is said to
 have suffered for sin: And to declare, that the Apostle
 did not only mean that Christ suffered upon the occa-
 sion of our Sins, but that he suffered in the place and
 stead of the Sinner; he adds, *the just for the unjust*;
 that is, the Son of God, who was innocent and had
 no Sin, suffered for us who were Sinners; or as it is
 elsewhere express'd, *he bare our sins in his own body on
 the Tree.*

It is true indeed, that Christ suffered for our bene-
 fit and advantage; which the Socinians would have
 to be all that is meant in the *Text* which I have cited:
 But then it ought to be considered, that Christ's suf-
 fering for our benefit and advantage does by no means
 exclude, nor is any wise inconsistent with his suf-
 fering in our stead. For whoever suffers in another
 Man's stead, and to save him from suffering, does
 undoubtedly suffer for his benefit and advantage, and
 gives the best demonstration of it that can be: But
 the manner of the expression, if compared with
 other parallel *Texts* of *Scripture*, and especially with
 what is so often said of our Saviour's being a *Sacrifice*,
 which I shall have occasion further to urge by and
 by; I say, the manner of the expression, if well con-
 sider'd, will appear to any Man that is not contenti-
 ous, to signify our Saviour's suffering instead of the
 Sinner.

But not to argue from words and phrases, I will
 produce two *Texts* which declare this matter so plainly,
 that the force of them is not to be avoided without
 the most shameful wresting and perverting of them.
 John 15. 12, 13. *This is my Commandment*, says our
 Saviour, *that you love one another, as I have loved you.*
 How is that? he declares in the next words, *Greater
 love than this hath no man, that a man lay down his life
 for his friend; that is, that he be contented to die*
 in

SERM. in his stead. And to the same purpose St. Paul, XLVII Rom. 6. 6, 7, 8. *For when ye were yet sinners, in due time Christ died for the ungodly*: Now the question is, whether by this expression of *Christ's dying for the ungodly* be meant only his dying for the benefit and advantage of Sinners, but not his dying in their stead; This, let the words which immediately follow determine: *For scarcely for a righteous man will one die, yet peradventure for a good man one would even dare to die; But God commendeth his love to us, in that whilst we were yet sinners Christ died for us.* And now I appeal to any Man of good Sense, whether it be not plain that the *Apostle* here speaks of *Christ's dying for Sinners* in the same sense as one Man is said to die for another; that is, to save another from death; which what is it else but to die in his stead? He that can deny this, is perverse to the highest degree, and I fear almost beyond the possibility of being convinced.

And the Argument, from these two *Texts* is so much the stronger, because we do not here reason merely from the phrase and expression, but from the main Scope of our *Saviour's* discourse in the one, and of St. Paul's in the other. For the Design of both is to recommend the superlative love of *Christ* to us above the greatest love that ever any Man express'd to another. The highest pitch that human affection did ever rise to, was for a Man to lay down his life for his Friend; but the *Son of God* laid down his life for his Enemies. *Scarcely*, says St. Paul, *would one lay down his life for a righteous man*, that is, for one who is but strictly just and honest, and does nobody wrong; but for a *good man*, that is, for one that is kind and beneficial to all, and hath obliged mankind by great Benefits, some one may be found that would lay down his life to save the life of such a Person: But the love of *Christ* hath gone far beyond this: *He died for sinners* for those who were neither good Men nor righteous: *But God commendeth his love to us, in that whilst we were yet sinners Christ died for*

ms. Now where doth the force of this Argument lie, SER M. if not in this? That *Christ* hath done that for us, XLVII who were *Enemies* and *Sinners*, which some very few Persons in the World have done for their *Friend*, or for some very eminently *good man*: And what is that? Why they have laid down their lives in their stead: And so *Christ* hath done for us. This seems to be so very plain, that I do not see how the force of this Argument is possible to be avoided.

It is evident then from *Scripture*, that *Christ* died not only for our advantage but in our stead; as truly and really as any Man ever did or can die for one another who lays down his own life to save another from death. For if *Christ* had not died, we had perished everlastingly; and because he died we are saved from eternal Death and Misery.

And though this be no where in *Scripture* spoken of by the name or term of *Satisfaction*, yet it is said to be the *Price* of our *Redemption*; which surely is the same in effect with *Satisfaction*. For as we are Sinners we are liable, and, as I may say, indebted to the Justice of God: And the Son of God, by his Death and Sufferings in our Nature, hath discharged this obligation, and paid this debt for us: Which discharge, since it was obtained for us by the shedding of *Christ's* blood, and the *Scripture* tells us, that *without shedding of blood there is no remission of sins*; and since God is graciously pleased to accept of it for the Debt which we owed to his Justice, and to declare himself fully pleased and contented with it; why it may not properly enough be called *payment* or *satisfaction*, I confess, I am not able to understand. Men may eternally wrangle about any thing, but what a frivolous contention, what a trifling in serious matters, what *baretry* in *Divinity* is this?

Not that God was *angry* with his *Son*, when he thus laid on him the iniquities of us all: No, he was always

SERM. always well pleased with him ; and never better, than
 XLVII when he *became obedient to the Death, even the Death*
 of the Cross, and bore our Sins in his own body on the
 Tree.

Nor yet that our *Saviour* suffered the very same that the Sinner should have suffered, namely, the proper Pains and Torment of the damned : But that his Obedience and Sufferings were of that value and esteem with God, and his voluntary Sacrifice of himself so well-pleasing to him, that he thereupon entered into a Covenant of Grace and Mercy with Mankind, wherein he hath engaged himself to forgive the Sins of those who believe and repent, and to make them partakers of eternal life. And hence the *Blood of Christ* which was shed for us upon the Cross is called *the Blood of the Covenant*, as being the *Sanction* of that *New Covenant*, into which God is entered with Mankind : and not only the *Sanction* and *Confirmation* of that *Covenant*, but the very *Foundation* of it : For which reason the Cup in the Lord's Supper is called *the New Testament*, or, as the word should rather be rendred, *the New Covenant in his Blood, which was shed for many for the remissions of Sins*. I proceed now to the

II. Thing propounded, which was to shew that the Expiation of our Sins was made by the Sufferings of Christ, from the *nature and intention* of *Expiatory Sacrifices*, both among the *Jews* and *Heathens* ; to which the *Death of Christ* is in the *New Testament* so frequently compared, and in point of virtue and efficacy to take away Sin infinitely preferred to it.

Now the nature and design of *Expiatory Sacrifices* was plainly this : To substitute one *Living Creature* to suffer and die instead of another, so that what the Sinner deserved to have suffered was supposed to be done to the Sacrifice, that is, it was slain to make an atonement for the Sinner.

And though there was no reason to hope for any such effect from the Blood of *Bulls*, or *Goats*, or of any other

other *living Creatures* that were wont to be offered up in Sacrifice ; yet that both *Jews* and *Heathen* did expect and hope for it, is so very evident, that it cannot without extreme Ignorance or Obstinacy be deny'd. SERM.
XLVII

But this expectation, how unreasonable soever, plainly shews it to have been the common Apprehension of Mankind, in all Ages, that God would not be appeased, nor should Sin be pardoned, without Suffering : But yet so that Men generally conceived good hopes, that upon the Repentance of Sinners that God would accept of a *vicarious* punishment ; that is, of the Suffering of some other in their stead. And very probably, as I said before, in compliance with this Apprehension of Mankind, and in condescension to it, as well as for other weighty Reasons best known to the Divine Wisdom, God was pleased to find out such a Sacrifice as should really and effectually procure for them that great Blessing of the Forgiveness of Sins which they had so long hoped for from the multitude of their own Sacrifices.

And the *Apostle* to the *Hebrews* doth in a large Discourse shew the great virtue and efficacy of the Sacrifice of *Christ*, to the purpose of Remission of Sins, above that of the Sacrifices under the Law : And that the Death of *Christ* is really and effectually to our advantage all that which the Sacrifices under the Law were supposed to be to the Sinner : But now once, saith the *Apostle* here in the Text, in the end of the World, hath he appeared to take away Sin by the Sacrifice of himself. This is the great virtue and efficacy of the Sacrifice of *Christ*, that whatever was expected from any other Sacrifices, either by *Jews* or *Heathens*, was really effected by this.

This was plainly signified by the *Jewish Passover*, wherein the *Lamb* was slain and the Sinner did escape, and was pass'd by. In allusion whereto St. Paul makes no scruple to call *Christ* our *Passover* or *Paschal Lamb*, who was slain that we might escape :

SERM. *Christ our Passover*, says he, *is slain*, or *offer'd* for XLVII *us*; that is, He by the gracious appointment of God was substituted to suffer all that in our stead which the *Paschal Lamb* was supposed to suffer for the Sinner.

And this was likewise signified by the Sinner's laying his hand upon the Sacrifice that was to be slain, thereby as it were transferring the punishment which was due to himself upon the Sacrifice that was to be slain and offered up. For so God tells *Moses*, that the Sinner, who came to offer an Expiatory Sacrifice should do: *Lev. 1. 4. He shall put his hand upon the head of the burnt-offering, and it shall be accepted for him, to make an Atonement for him.* And the *Apostle* tells us, that it was an established Principle in the *Jewish Religion*, that *without shedding of blood there was no remission of Sins*: Which plainly shews, that they expected this Benefit of the Remission of Sins, from the Blood of their Sacrifices.

And then he tells us, that we are really made partakers of this Benefit by the Blood of *Christ*, and by the virtue of his Sacrifice: And again, *Christ*, says he, *Heb. 9. 28. was once offered to bear the Sins of many*; plainly alluding to the Sacrifices under the Law, which did, as it were, bear the faults of the Sinner.

And that this expression of *Christ's* being offered to bear our Sins, cannot be meant of his taking away our Sins by his holy Doctrine which was confirmed by his Death, but of his bearing our Sins by way of *imputation*, and by his suffering for them in our stead, as the Sacrifice was supposed to do for the Sinner: This, I say, is evident beyond all denial from the opposition which follows after the Text, between his *first Appearance* and his *second*; *Christ*, says our *Apostle*, *ver. 28. was once offered to bear our Sins; but unto them that look for him he shall appear a second time without sin unto salvation.* Why? Did he not appear the first time without Sin? Yes certainly,

tainly, as to any inherent guilt ; for the Scripture SERM.
XLVII tells us, *he had no Sin*. What then is the meaning of the opposition, That at his *first* Coming *he bore our Sins*, but at his *second* Coming *he shall appear without sin unto Salvation* ? These words can have no other imaginable sense but this, that at his *first* Coming he sustain'd the Person of a Sinner and suffered instead of us ; but his *second* Coming shall be upon another account, and *he shall appear without sin unto salvation* ; that is not as a *Sacrifice*, but as a *Judge*, to confer the Reward of Eternal Life upon those who are partakers of the benefit of that *Sacrifice* which he offered to God for us *in the days of his flesh*. I proceed to the

III. Thing I propos'd, and which yet remains to be spoken to ; namely, to vindicate this Method and *Dispensation* of the *Divine Wisdom* from the *Objections* which are brought against it ; and to shew that there is nothing in it that is unreasonable, or any wise unworthy of God. I shall mention *four Objections* which are commonly urged in this matter, and I think they are all that are considerable.

First, That this Method, of the *Expiation* of Sin by the Sufferings of *Christ*, seems to argue some defect and want of Goodness in God, as if he needed some external Motive, and were not of himself disposed to forgive Sinners.

To which I think the *Answer* is not difficult, namely, that God did not want Goodness to have forgiven Sin freely and without any Satisfaction, but his Wisdom did not think it meet to give encouragement to Sin by too easy a forgiveness, and without some remarkable testimony of his severe displeasure against it : And therefore his greater Goodness and Compassion to Mankind devised this way to save the Sinner, without giving the least countenance and encouragement to Sin.

For God to think of saving us any way, was excessive Goodness and Mercy ; but to think of doing

SERM. it in this way, by substituting his dearly beloved Son
XLVII to suffer in our stead, is a Condescension so very amazing, that if God had not been pleased of his own Goodness to stoop to it, it had almost been Blasphemy in Man to have thought of it, or desired it.

Secondly, How can our Sins be said to have been forgiven *freely*, if the Pardon of them was purchased at so dear a rate, and so mighty a price was paid for it?

In *Answer* to this I desire these *two* things may be considered. *1st*, That it is a wonderful grace and favour of God to admit of this Translation of the Punishment which was due to us, and to accept of the Sufferings of another in our stead, and for our benefit; when he might justly have exacted it of us in our own Persons: So that, even in this respect, we are, as St. Paul says, *justified freely by his grace through the Redemption that is in Jesus Christ*: And *freely* too in respect of any necessity that lay upon God to forgive us in this or any other way. It was a free act of his Goodness to save us, even by the Satisfaction and Sufferings of his own Son. *2dly*, It was in effect *freely* too, notwithstanding the mighty Price which was paid for our Redemption. Because this Price was not of our own procuring, but of God's providing; He *found out this Ransom for us*. And will any Man say, that a Prince who prevails with his Son to intercede for the Pardon of a Rebel, yea and to suffer some punishment or to pay a Fine for the obtaining of it, does not in effect and in all equitable and grateful construction forgive him *freely*?

Thirdly, It is yet further objected, That this seems to be more unreasonable than the sacrificing of *Beasts* among the *Jews*, nay than the sacrificing of *Men* among the *Heathen*, and even of their *own Sons and Daughters*: Because this is the offering up of the *Son of God*, the most innocent and the most excellent Person that ever was.

To which I answer, that if we consider the *manner*, and the *design* of it, the thing will appear to be quite otherwise. SERM. XLVII

As to the *manner* of it, God did not command his Son to be sacrificed, but his Providence permitted the Wickedness and Violence of Men to put him to death. And then his Goodness and Wisdom did over-rule this worst of Actions to the best of Ends. And if we consider the matter aright, how is this any more a reflection upon the holy Providence of God, than any Enormity and Cruelties which by his permission are daily committed in the World?

And then if we consider the *End* and *Design* of this permission of *Christ's* Death, and the application of it to the purpose of a general Expiation; we cannot but acknowledge, and even adore the gracious and merciful Design of it. For by this means God did at once put an end to that unreasonable and bloody way of Worship, which had been so long practis'd in the World: And after this one Sacrifice, which was so infinitely dear to God, the benefit of Expiation was not to be expected in any other way; all other Sacrifices being worthless and vain in comparison of this: And it hath ever since obtained this effect, of making all other Sacrifices to cease, in all parts of the World where *Christianity* hath prevailed.

Fourthly, The last *Objection* is, the Injustice and Cruelty of an innocent Person's suffering instead of the Offender.

To this I answer, that they who make so great a noise with this *Objection* do seem to me to give a full and clear *Answer* to it themselves, by acknowledging, as they constantly and expressly do, that our *Saviour* suffered all this for our *benefit* and *advantage*, though not in our *place* and *stead*. For this, to my apprehension, is plainly to give up the Cause, unless they can shew a good reason why there is not as much Injustice and Cruelty in an innocent Person's

SERM. XLVII suffering for the benefit and advantage of a Malefactor, as in his suffering in his *stead*: So little do Men, in the heat of dispute and opposition, who are resolv'd to hold fast an Opinion in despite of Reason and good Sense, consider, that they do many times in effect, and by necessary consequence, grant the very thing which in exprefs terms they do so stiffly and pertinaciously deny.

The truth of the matter is this; there is nothing of Injustice or Cruelty in either case; neither in an innocent Person's suffering for the *benefit* of an Offender, nor in his *stead*; supposing the Suffering to be voluntary: But they have equally the same appearance of Injustice and Cruelty: Nor can I possibly discern any reason why Injustice and Cruelty should be objected in the one Case more than in the other, there being every whit as little reason why an *innocent Person* should suffer for the *benefit* of a *Criminal*, as why he should suffer in his *stead*. So that I hope this *Objection*, which above all the rest hath been so loudly and so invidiously urged, hath received a just *Answer*.

And I believe, if the matter were search'd to the bottom, all this perverse contention, about our Saviour's suffering for our *benefit* but not in our *stead*, will signify just nothing. For if *Christ* died for our *benefit* so as some way or other, by virtue of his Death and Sufferings, to save us from the wrath of God and to procure our escape from eternal Death; this for ought I know, is all that any body means by his dying in our *stead*. For he that dies with an intention to do that *benefit* to another as to save him from Death, doth certainly to all intents and purposes die in his place and *stead*.

And if they will grant this to be their meaning, the Controversy is at an end; and both sides are agreed in the thing, and do only differ in the phrase and manner of expression: which is to seek a quarrel and an occasion of difference where there is no real

real ground for it : A thing which ought to be very
far from reasonable and peaceable Minds.

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For the *Socinians* say, that our *Saviour's* voluntary Obedience and Sufferings did procure his Exaltation at the right hand of God, and Power and Authority to forgive Sins, and to give eternal Life to as many as he pleased : So that they grant that his Obedience and Sufferings, in the meritorious consequence of them, do redound to our *benefit* and advantage as much as we pretend and say they do ; only they are loth in exprefs terms to acknowledge that *Christ* died in our *stead* : And this, for no other reason, that I can imagine, but because they have denied it so often and so long.

But I appeal to the Ingenuity of our *Adversaries*, whether this do not in the last issue come all to one ; and be not, on their part, a mere Controversy about words ; for suppose a Malefactor condemned to some grievous punishment, and the King's Son to save him from it is contented to submit to great disgrace and sufferings : In reward of which sufferings the King takes his Son into his Throne and sets him at his own right hand, and gives him power to pardon this Malefactor, and upon a fitting Submission and Repentance to advance him to honour : Will not any Man in this case allow, that the King's Son suffered instead of this Malefactor, and smile at any Man that shall be so nice as to grant that indeed he *suffered* for him, but yet to deny that he was *punish'd* for him, to allow that he bore the inconvenience of his faults, but yet obstinately to stand it out that the faults of this Malefactor were not laid upon him, or in any wise so imputed to him that he can be said to have suffered in his stead ? This is just the Case, and the difference in reality and in the last result of things is nothing but words.

Thus far have I tried your patience in a contentious Argument ; in which I take no pleasure, but yet shall be glad if I may be so happy as by any thing that hath been said to contribute towards the putting

SERM. an end to so unhappy a Controversy, which hath
 XLVII troubled the World so long, and raised such a dust
 ~~~~~ that very few have been able to see clearly through  
 it.

However I cannot dismiss this Argument without making some useful but very short reflections upon this great Doctrine of our Religion, namely, That the Son of God being made a Sacrifice for us, and exposed to such bitter Sufferings and so cruel a Death for the Expiation of our Sins, should create in us the greatest dread and detestation of Sin, and for ever deter us from all wilful transgression and disobedience. For if the guilt of our Sins was done away upon such hard terms, and cost the dearly beloved Son of God so much sweat and blood, then surely we ought to take great heed how by our renewed Provocations we renew his Passion, and do what in us lies to *crucify to ourselves the Son of God afresh, and to put him to an open shame.*

If God did so terribly afflict the dearly beloved of his Soul for our sakes; if the Son of God was so grievously wounded for our transgressions, and so sorely bruised for our iniquities: If so fearful a Storm of Vengeance fell upon the most innocent Person that ever was for our Sins, then we have reason to take that kind and merciful admonition of the Son of God to Sinners, to *sin no more, lest a worse thing, if it be possible, come upon ourselves.*

In this Dispensation of God's Grace and Mercy to Mankind, by the Death of his Son, God seems to have gone to the very extremity of things, and almost further than Goodness and Justice will well admit; to afflict Innocency itself to save the guilty: And if herein God hath expressed his hatred of Sin in such a wonderful way of Love and Kindness to the Sons of Men as looks almost like hatred of Innocency and his own Son: This ought, in all ingenuity and gratitude to our gracious Redeemer, who *was made a curse for us, and loved us to that degree as to wash us from our sins in his own blood; I say, this*

his ought to beget in us a greater displeasure against SERM.  
Sin, and a more perfect detestation of it, than if we XLVII  
had suffered the punishment due to it, in our own  
Persons: For in this case, we could only have been  
displeased at ourselves and our Sins as the just Cause  
of our Sufferings: but in the other, we ought to hate  
Sin as the unhappy occasion of the saddest Misfor-  
tune and forest Calamities to the *best Man* that ever  
was, and to our *best Friend*, for our Sins and for our  
Sakes.

Since then the *Son of God* hath so graciously con-  
descended to be *made in all things* like unto us, *sin on-  
ly excepted*; let us aspire as much as is possible, to be-  
come like to Him: Above all, let us hate and a-  
void Sin as the only thing in which the Son of God  
would have no part with us, though he was content-  
ed to suffer such bitter things to save us from the  
Defilement and Dominion of it, from the Pu-  
nishment and all the dismal consequences of it.

*He had no sin*, but God was pleased to *lay upon  
him the iniquities of us all*: and *to make his soul an  
offering for sin*, and to permit all that to be done to  
Him which was due to us: He was contented to  
be sacrificed once for all Mankind, that Men  
might for ever cease from that inhuman and ineffectu-  
al way of sacrificing one another; whereby instead of  
*expiating* their guilt they did inflame it, and by think-  
ing to make atonement for their Sins they did in  
truth add to the number and heinousness of them.

And let us likewise learn from this admirable Pat-  
tern, to pity those that are in misery, as *Christ* also  
hath pitied us; and to *save them that are ready to pe-  
rish*, for his sake who *came to seek and to save us that  
were lost*.

Let us, upon all occasions, be ready to open our  
bowels of Compassion towards the Poor; in a thank-  
ful imitation of his Grace and Goodness who for our  
sakes chose to be a Beggar, that we for his sake  
might not despise the Poor, but might have a tender  
regard and Compassion to those whose condition in  
this

SERM. this World does so nearly resemble that in which the  
 XLVII Son of God thought it fittest for him to appear when  
 he was pleased to become Man.

In a word, Let us in the whole course, and in all the actions of our lives, *shew forth the virtues of Him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light; and hath raised up a mighty salvation for us, that being delivered from all our spiritual enemies, from Sin and all the Powers of Darkness, we might serve him who hath saved us; walking in holiness and righteousness before him, all the days of our lives.*

Now, to him that sitteth upon the throne, and to the Lamb that was slain: To God even our Father, and to our Lord Jesus Christ, the first begotten from the dead, and the Prince of the Kings of the Earth, Unto him, who hath loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own Blood; and whilst we were Enemies to Him, loved us at such a rate as never any Man did his Friend; To Him, who became Man, that he might bring us to God; and assumed our frail and mortal Nature, that he might cloath us with Immortality and Life: To Him, who was pleased to dwell and live amongst us, that he might teach us how to live: To Him who died for our sins, and rose again for our Justification, and lives for ever to make Intercession for us: To Him, be Glory and Dominion, Thanksgiving and Praise to Eternal Ages. Amen.



## S E R M O N XLVIII.

Concerning the Unity of the Divine  
Nature, and the Blessed Trinity, &c.

I TIM. ii. 5.

*For there is one God.*

**T**HE Particle *for* leads us to the confide-S E R M.  
ration of the Context and Occasion of these XLVIII.  
words, which in short is this. The design of  
this *Epistle* is to direct *Timothy*, to whom St.  
*Paul* had committed the Government of the Church  
of *Ephesus*, how he ought to demean himself in that  
great and weighty Charge. And at the beginning  
of this *Chapter* he gives direction concerning *publick*  
*Prayers* in the Church; that *Prayers* and *Thanksgi-*  
*ving be made for all men*, and for all Ranks and Orders  
of Men; especially for *Kings and all that are in au-*  
*thority, that under them Christians might lead a quiet*  
*and peaceable life in all godliness and honesty.*

And this he tells us was very suitable to the *Christian*  
Religion, by which God design'd the Salvation of  
Mankind; and therefore it must needs be very ac-  
ceptable to him that we should offer up *Prayers* and  
*Thanksgivings* to him in behalf of *all men*; For this,  
saith the Apostle, *is good and acceptable in the sight of*  
*God our Saviour, who will have all men to be saved,*  
*and to come to the knowledge of the Truth.*

And then it follows in the next words, *For there*  
*is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the*  
*man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all:*  
As if he had said, this universal Charity of *Christians*,  
in *praying for all men*, must needs be very acceptable  
to

SERM. to him to whom we put up our Prayers, *God the Father*, who sent his Son for the Salvation of all men. **XLVIII.** And to him likewise by whom we offer up our Prayers to God, and is amongst us *Christians* the only Mediator between God and men, in virtue of that Price and Ransom which he paid for the Redemption of all Mankind; I say, for this reason it must needs be very acceptable to him that we should pray for all Men, because he died for all Men, and now, that he is in Heaven at the right hand of God, intercedes with him for the Salvation of those for whom he died: *There is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself a ransom for all.*

Which words, though they be brought in to prove more immediately, that it is *acceptable to God our Saviour*, that we should put up Prayers to him for all men, because he desires the Salvation of all Men, and hath sent his Son to purchase the Salvation of all Men, by the sacrifice of himself; and in virtue of that sacrifice to be the only Mediator between God and us; I say, though this be the immediate scope and design of these words, yet they are likewise a direction unto us, unto whom we ought to address our Prayers, namely, to God; and by whose mediation and Intercession we ought to put up our Prayers to God the Father, namely, by his Son Jesus Christ, who is constituted the only Mediator between God and men.

There are several Propositions contained in this and the following verse; but I shall at present confine myself to the first, namely, That *there is one God*, that is, *but One*, as St. Paul elsewhere expresseth it, *There is none other God but One.* 1 Cor. 8. 4. And Moses lays this as the Foundation of the Natural Law, as well as of the Jewish Religion, *The Lord he is One God, and there is none besides him,* Deut. 4. 35. that is, besides *Jehovah*, whom the People of Israel did worship as the only true God. And this the Prophet *Isaiah* perpetually declares in opposition to the Poly-

theism

beism and variety of Gods among the *Heathen*. *Isa.* SERM. XLVIII.  
 4. 6. *I am the first, and I am the last, and besides me there is no God.* And again, *verse 8. Is there any God besides me? there is no God, I know not any:* He, who hath an infinite knowledge and knows all things, knows no other God. And our *blessed Saviour* makes this the *fundamental Article* of all Religion, and the Knowledge of it necessary to every Man's Salvation; *This, says He, is life eternal, to know thee the only true God.*

The *Unity* of the *Divine Nature* is a *Notion* wherein the greatest and the wisest part of Mankind did always agree, and therefore may reasonably be presumed to be either *natural* or to have sprung from some *Original Tradition* delivered down to us from the *first Parents* of Mankind: I mean, that there is *One Supreme Being*, the *Author* and *Cause* of all things whom the most ancient of the *Heathen Poets* commonly called *the Father of Gods and Men*. And thus *Aristotle* in his *Metaphysicks* defines God, *the eternal and most excellent, or best of all living Beings*. And this *Notion*, of *One Supreme Being*, agrees very well with that exact *Harmony* which appears in the *Frame* and *Government* of the *World*, in which we see all things conspiring to one *End*, and continuing in one uniform *Order* and *Course*; which cannot reasonably be ascribed to any other but a constant and uniform *Cause*; and which to a considering Man does plainly shew, that all things are made and governed by that *One* powerful *Principle*, and great and wise *Mind* which we call *God*.

But although the generality of Mankind had a *Notion* of *One Supreme God*, yet the *Idolatry* of the *Heathen* plainly shews, that this *Notion*, in process of time was greatly degenerated, and corrupted into an apprehension of a *Plurality* of *Gods*; though in reason it is evident enough, that there can be no more Gods than *One*; and that *One*, who is of infinite *Perfection*, is as sufficient to all purposes whatsoever,



SERM. soever, as ten thousand Deities, if they were possible,  
 XLVIII. could possibly be; as I shall shew in the following  
 Discourse.

Now this multitude of *Deities*, which the fond Superstition and vain Imagination of Men had formed to themselves, were by the *Wiser* sort, who being forced to comply with the follies of the People endeavoured to make the best of them, supposed to be either *Parts* of the *Universe* which the *Egyptians*, as *Plutarch* tells us, thought to be the same with *God*; but then the more considerable *Parts* of the *Universe* they parcelled out into several *Deities*; and as the *Ocean* hath several *Names*, according to the several *Coasts* and *Countries* by which it passeth; so they gave several *Names* to this *One Deity* according to the several *Parts* of the *World* which several *Nations* made the *Objects* of their *Worship*.

Or else, they adored the several *Perfections* and *Powers* of the *One Supreme God* under several *Names* and *Titles*, with regard to the various *Blessings* and *Benefits* which they thought they received from him.

Thus the *Indian* Philosophers, the *Brachmans*, are said to have worshipped the *Sun* as the *Supreme Deity*; and he certainly is the most *Worshipful* of all sensible *Beings*, and bids fairest for a *Deity*; especially if he was, as they supposed, animated by a *Spirit* endued with *Knowledge* and *Understanding*. And if a *Man* who had been bred in a dark *Cave*, should all on the sudden be brought out at *Noon-day* to behold this visible *World*; after he had view'd and consider'd it a while, he would in all probability pitch upon the *Sun* as the most likely, of all the things he had seen, to be a *Deity*. For if such a *Man* had any *Notion* of a *God*, and were to chuse one upon sight, he would without dispute fix upon the *Sun*, and fall down before him and worship him.

And *Macrobius* manageth this as his main *Plea* for the *Idolatri* of the *Heathen*, that under all the several *Names* of their *Gods* they worshipped the *Sun*:  
 And

And this diversity of *Names* was but a more distinct SERM. conception and acknowledgment of the many Blessings and Advantages which Mankind receiv'd from him, and a more particular and express Adoration of the several *Powers* and *Perfections* which were in him. And this was the very best defence, and all the tolerable sense which the *Wise*st among the *Heathen* could make of the *multitude* of their *Deities*. XLVIII.

And yet whilst they generally owned *One Supreme Being* that was the *Principle* and *Original* of all things, they worshipped several *subordinate Deities* as really distinct from one another. Some of these they fancied to be *superior* to the rest and to have their residence in *Heaven*; by which *Marsilius Ficinus* supposes *Plato* to mean no more but the *Chief* of the *Angels*. These were called θεοί, *Dii Superi*, and *Dii Caelestes*, *superior* and *heavenly Gods*: The *Scripture* terms them the *Host of Heaven*, meaning the *Sun*, *Moon*, and *Stars*, which they supposed to be animated, or at least to be inhabited by *Angels*, or glorious Spirits whom they called *Gods*.

Other of their *Deities* were accounted much inferior to these, being supposed to be the *Souls* of their deceased *Heroes*; who for their great and worthy Deeds, when they lived upon Earth, were supposed after Death to be translated into the number of their *Gods*. And these were called *Semidei* and *Deastri*, that is, *half Gods* and a sort of *Gods*. And as the other were *Celestial*, so these were δαίμονες ἐπιχθόνιοι, a kind of *Terrestrial Spirits* that were *Presidents* and *Procurators* of Human Affairs here below; that is, a middle sort of *Divine Powers* that were *Mediators* and *Agents* between *God* and *Men*, and did carry the Prayers and Supplications of Men to God, and bring down the Commands and Blessings of God to Men.

But in the midst of all this *Crowd* and *Confusion* of *Deities*, and the various *Superstitions* about them, the *Wiser Heathen*, as *Thales*, *Pythagoras*, *Socrates*, *Plato*, *Aristotle*, *Tully*, *Plutarch*, and others, preserved

SERM. a true Notion of *One Supreme God*, whom they de-  
 XLVIII. fined an *infinite Spirit*, pure from all Matter, and free  
 from all Imperfection: And all the variety of their  
 Worship was, as they pretended in excuse of it, but  
 a more particular owning of the various representa-  
 tions of the Divine Power and Excellencies which  
 manifested themselves in the World, and of the se-  
 veral communications of Blessings and Favours by  
 them imparted to Men: And *Tertullian* observes,  
 that even when Idolatry had very much obscur'd the  
 Glory of the *Sovereign Deity*, yet the greater part of  
 Mankind did still in their common *Forms of Speech*  
 appropriate the name of *God* in a more especial and  
 peculiar manner to *One*, saying, *If God grant*, *If*  
*God please*, and the like.

*Adversus*  
*Marcio-*  
*nem* 1, 1.  
 c. 10.

So that there is sufficient ground to believe, that  
 the *Unity of the Divine Nature*, or the Notion of  
*One Supreme God*, Creator and Governour of the  
 World, was the Primitive and general belief of  
 Mankind: and that *Polytheism* and *Idolatry* were a  
 corruption and degeneracy from the *Original Notion*  
 which Mankind had concerning *God*; as the *Scripture*  
*History* doth declare and testify.

And this Account which I have given of the *Hea-*  
*then Idolatry* doth by no means excuse it. For what-  
 ever may be said by way of extenuation in behalf of  
 some few of the wiser and more devout among them,  
 the generality were grossly guilty both of believing  
*more Gods*, and of worshipping *false Gods*.

And this must needs be a very great Crime, since  
 the *Scripture* every where declares *God* to be parti-  
 cularly *jealous* in this Case, and that *he will not give*  
*his glory to another, nor his praise to graven Images*:  
 Nay, we may not so much as make use of sensible  
 Images to put us in mind of *God*, lest devout Ignor-  
 ance, seeing the Worship which wise Men paid to-  
 wards an *Idol*, should be drawn to terminate their  
 Worship there, as being the very *Deity* itself; which  
 was certainly the Case of the greatest part of the *Hea-*  
*then World*.

And



And surely those Christians are in no less danger of *Idolatry*, who pay a veneration to *Images* by kneeling down and praying before them; and in this they are much more inexcusable, because they offend against a much clearer Light; and yet when they go about to justify this Practice are able to bring no other nor better *Pleas* for themselves than the *Heathen* did for their worshipping of *Images*, and for praying to their *inferior Deities*, whom they looked upon as *Mediators* between the *Gods* in Heaven and *Men* upon Earth.

There is but one *Objection*, that I know of, against the general Consent of Mankind concerning the *Unity of God*; and it is this, That there was an ancient Doctrine of some of the most ancient Nations that there were *two first Causes* or *Principles* of all things; the one the cause of all *Good*, and the other of all the *Evil* that is in the World: The reason whereof seems to have been, that they could not apprehend how things of so contrary nature, as *Good* and *Evil*, could proceed from *one* and the same *Cause*.

And these two *Principles* in several Nations were called by several Names. *Plutarch* says, that among the *Greeks* the *Good Principle* was called *God*, and the *Evil Principle* Δαίμων, or the *Devil*. In conformity to which ancient Tradition of the *Manichees*, a *Set* which called themselves *Christians*, did advance two *Principles*, the one infinitely *Good*, which they supposed to be the *Original Cause* of all the *good* which is in the World; the other infinitely *Evil*, to which they ascribed all the *evils* that are in the World.

But all this is very plainly a corruption of a much more ancient *Tradition* concerning that *old Serpent* the *Devil*, the Head of the *fallen Angels*, who by tempting our *First Parents* to transgress a positive and express Law of God brought *Sin* first into the World and all the *Evils* consequent upon it; of which the *Scripture* gives us a most express and particular account.

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And as the *Notion* of a *Being infinitely Evil* into which this *Tradition* was corrupted, after *Idolatry* had prevailed in the World, besides that it is a Contradiction, it would likewise be to no purpose to assert *two* opposite *Principles* of *infinite*, that is, of *equal* Force and Power, for *two infinites* must of necessity be equal to one another; because nothing can be more or greater than Infinite, and therefore if *two* infinite Beings were possible they would certainly be equal, and could not be otherwise.

Now that the *Notion* of a *Principle infinitely Evil* is a Contradiction will be very plain, if we consider that what is *infinitely Evil* must in strict Reasoning, and by necessary consequence, be infinitely imperfect; and therefore infinitely weak, and for that reason, though never so malicious and mischievous, yet being infinitely weak and foolish, could never be in capacity either to contrive mischief or to execute it.

But if it should be admitted, that a *Being infinitely mischievous* could be infinitely knowing and powerful, yet it could effect no evil; because the opposite *Principle* of *infinite Goodness*, being also infinitely Wise and Powerful, they would tie up one another's hands. So that upon this supposition the *Notion* of a *Deity* must signify just nothing, because by virtue of the eternal opposition and equal conflict of these *two Principles* they would keep one another at a perpetual Bay; and being just an equal Match to one another, the *one* having as much mind and power to do *good* as the *other* to do *evil*, instead of being *two Deities* they would be but *two Idols*, able to do neither *good* nor *evil*.

And having, I hope, now sufficiently clear'd this *Objection*, I shall proceed to shew how agreeable this *Principle*, that *there is but one God*, is to the common Reason of Mankind, and to the clearest and most essential *Notions* which we have of God: And this will appear these *two* ways.

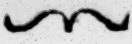
*First*, By considering the most essential *Perfections* of the Divine Nature. *Secondly*,

*Secondly*, From the repugnancy and impossibility, SERM. XLVIII.  
the great absurdity and inconvenience of supposing  
more Gods than One.

*First*, By considering the most essential *Perfections* of the Divine Nature. *Absolute Perfection* which we ascribe to God, as the most essential Notion which Mankind hath always had concerning Him, does necessarily suppose *Unity*; because this is essential to the Notion of a Being that is *absolutely Perfect*, that all Perfection meets and is united in such a Being: But to imagine more Gods, and some Perfections to be in one and some in another, does destroy the most essential notion which men have of God, namely, that *He* is a *Being absolutely Perfect*, that is, as perfect as is possible: Now to suppose some Perfections in one God which are not in another, is to suppose some possible Perfection to be wanting in God, which is a Contradiction to the most natural and the most easy Notion which all Men have of God, that he is a Being in whom all Perfections do meet and are united: But if we suppose more Gods, each of which hath all Perfections united in Him, then all but one would be superfluous and needless; and therefore by just and necessary consequence not only *may*, but of necessity *must* be supposed not to be; since *necessary existence* is *essential* to the *Deity*: and therefore if *but one God* be necessary, there can be no more.

*Secondly*, From the repugnancy and impossibility, the great *absurdity* and *inconveniency* of the contrary. For suppose there were more Gods, *two* for example: and if there may be *two* there may be a *million*, for we can stop no where: I say, suppose *two Gods*; either these *two* would be in all Perfections equal and alike, or unequal and unlike: If equal and alike in all things, then, as I said before, one of them would be needless and superfluous, and if *one*, why not as well the *other*? they being supposed to be in all things perfectly alike; and then there would be no necessity at all of the being of a God; and yet it is granted on all Hands, that *necessary existence* is essen-



SERM. XLVIII  tial to the Notion of a *God* : But if they be unequal, that is, *one* of them inferior to and less perfect than the *other*, that which is inferior and less perfect could not be *God*, because he would not have all perfection. So that which way soever we turn the thing and look upon it, the Notion of more *Gods* than *One* is by its own repugnancy and self-contradiction destructive of itself.

Before I come to apply this *Doctrine* of the *Unity of God*, I must not pass by a very considerable *Difficulty*, which will most certainly arise in every *Man's* Mind, without taking particular notice of it, and endeavouring to remove it, if I can. And it is the *Doctrine* of the *Blessed Trinity*, or of *three* real *Differences* or *distinct Persons* in *One* and the same *Divine Nature*.

And though this be not a *Difficulty* peculiar only to the *Christian* Religion, as by the generality of those who urge this *Objection* against *Christians* hath been inconsiderately thought ; for it is certain, that long before *Christianity* appeared in the World, there was a very ancient *Tradition*, both among *Jews* and *Heathen*, concerning *three* real *Differences* or *Distinctions* in the *Divine Nature*, very nearly resembling the *Christian* Doctrine of the *Trinity*, as I shall have occasion more fully to shew by and by: Yet it cannot be deny'd, but that this *Difficulty* doth in a more especial manner affect the *Christian* Religion ; the generality of *Christians*, who do most firmly believe the *Trinity*, believing likewise at the same time, more stedfastly if it be possible, 1 Cor. 8. 6. *that there is but one God*. To us, saith St. Paul, that is, to us *Christians* there is but one God. But how can this possibly consist with the common *Doctrine* of *Christians* concerning the *Trinity*, God the *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*, to each of whom they attribute, as they verily believe the *Scripture* does, the most incommunicable *Properties* and *Perfections* of

of the *Divine Nature*? And what is this less in effect than to say, *That there are three Gods*? SERM.  
XLVIII

For the clearing of this *Difficulty* I shall, with all the brevity I can, offer these following *Considerations*; which I hope, to an impartial and unprejudiced Judgment, will be sufficient to remove it, or at least to break the main force and strength of it.

I. I desire it may be well consider'd, that there is a wide difference between the nice *Speculations* of the *Schools*, beyond what is revealed in *Scripture*, concerning the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, and what the *Scripture* only teaches and asserts concerning this *Mystery*. For it is not to be deny'd but that the *Schoolmen*, who abounded in wit and leisure, though very few among them had either exact skill in the *Holy Scriptures*, or in *Ecclesiastical Antiquity* and the *Writings* of the *ancient Fathers* of the *Christian Church*: I say, it cannot be deny'd but that these *Speculative* and very acute Men, who wrought a great part of their *Divinity* out of their own Brain, as Spiders do Cobwebs out of their own bowels, have started a thousand *subtilties* about this *Mystery*, such as no *Christian* is bound to trouble his head withal; much less is it necessary for him to understand those *niceties*, which we may reasonably presume that they who talk of them did themselves never thoroughly understand; and least of all is it necessary to believe them. The modesty of *Christians* is contented in *Divine Mysteries* to know what God hath thought fit to reveal concerning them, and hath no curiosity to be *wise above that which is written*. It is enough to believe what God says concerning these matters; and if any Man will venture to say more, every other Man surely is at his liberty to believe as he sees reason.

II. I desire it may in the next place be consider'd, that the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, even as it is asserted in *Scripture*, is acknowledged by us to be still a great *Mystery*, and so imperfectly revealed as to be in a great measure incomprehensible by human Reason.

SERM. son. And therefore though some learned and judi-  
 cious Men may have very commendably attempted  
 a more particular explication of this great *Mystery*  
 by the strength of *Reason*, yet I dare not pretend  
 to that, knowing both the difficulty and danger  
 of such an Attempt, and mine own insufficiency  
 for it.

All that I ever designed upon this Argument was  
 to make out the credibility of the thing from the  
 Authority of the *Holy Scriptures*, without descen-  
 ding to a more particular explication of it than the  
*Scripture* hath given us ; lest by endeavouring to lay  
 the *Difficulties* which are already started about it new  
 ones should be raised, and such as may perhaps be much  
 harder to be removed than those which we have now  
 to grapple withal. And this I hope I have in some  
 measure done in \* one of the former *Discourses*.  
 Nor indeed do I see that it is any ways necessary to  
 do more ; it being sufficient that God hath declared  
 what he thought fit in this matter, and that we do  
 firmly believe what he says concerning it to be true,  
 though we do not perfectly comprehend the mean-  
 ing of all that he hath said about it.

For in this and the like Cases I take an *implicit*  
*Faith* to be very commendable, that is, to believe  
 whatever we are sufficiently assured God hath revea-  
 led, though we do not fully understand his meaning  
 in such a Revelation. And thus every Man who be-  
 lieves the *Holy Scriptures* to be a truly *Divine* Reve-  
 lation, does *implicitly* believe a great part of the *pro-*  
*phetical* Books of *Scripture* and several obscure expres-  
 sions in those Books, though he do not particularly  
 understand the meaning of all the Predictions and  
 Expressions contained in them. In like manner,  
 there are certainly a great many very good *Christi-*  
*ans* who do not believe and comprehend the Mys-  
 teries of Faith nicely enough to approve themselves to  
 a *scholastical* and magisterial *Judge* of *Controversies*,  
 who yet if they do heartily embrace the *Doctrines*  
 which



which are clearly revealed in *Scripture*, and live up to the plain *Precepts* of the *Christian* Religion, will I doubt not be very well approved by the great and just, and by the *infallibly* infallible Judge of the World.

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III. Let it be further considered, that tho' neither the Word *Trinity*, nor perhaps *Person*, in the sense in which it is used by *Divines* when they treat of this *Mystery*, be any where to be met with in *Scripture*; yet it cannot be deny'd but that *Three* are there spoken of by the Names of *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*, in whose Name every *Christian* is baptiz'd, and to each of whom the highest *Titles* and *Properties* of *God* are in *Scripture* attributed: And these *Three* are spoken with as much distinction from one another as we use to speak of *three* several Persons.

So that though the word *Trinity* be not found in *Scripture*, yet these *Three* are there expressly and frequently mention'd; and a *Trinity* is nothing but *three* of any thing. And so likewise though the word *Person* be not there expressly applied to *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*; yet it will be very hard to find a more convenient word whereby to express the distinction of these *Three*. For which reason I could never yet see any just cause to quarrel at this *term*. For since the *Holy Spirit* of *God* in *Scripture* hath thought fit in speaking of these *Three* to distinguish them from one another, as we use in common speech to distinguish *three* several *Persons*, I cannot see any reason why, in the explication of this *Mystery* which purely depends upon *Divine Revelation*, we should not speak of it in the same manner as the *Scripture* doth: And though the word *Person* is now become a *Term of Art*, I see no cause why we should decline it, so long as we mean by it neither more nor less than what the *Scripture* says in other Words.

IV. It deserves further to be considered, That there hath been a very ancient *Tradition* concern-

SERM. ing *three* real *Differences* or *Distinctions* in the Di-  
 XLVIII. *vine Nature* ; and these, as I said before, very  
 nearly resembled the *Christian* Doctrine of the  
*Trinity*.

Whence this *Tradition* had its original is not easy upon good and certain grounds to say ; but certain it is that the *Jews* anciently had this *Notion* : And that they did distinguish the *Word of God*, and the *Holy Spirit of God*, from *Him* who was *absolutely* called *God*, and whom they looked upon as the *first Principle* of all things ; as is plain from *Philo Judaeus*, and *Moses Nachmanides*, and others cited by the learned *Grotius* in his incomparable *Book of the Truth of the Christian Religion*.

And among the *Heathen*, *Plato*, who probably enough might have this *Notion* from the *Jews*, did make *three Distinctions* in the *Deity* by the Names of *Essential Goodness*, and *Mind*, and *Spirit*.

So that whatever *Objections* this matter may be liable to, it is not so peculiar a *Doctrine* of the *Christian* Religion as many have imagined, though it is revealed by it with much more clearness and certainty : And consequently, neither the *Jews* nor *Plato* have any Reason to object it to us *Christians* ; especially since they pretend no other ground for it but either their own *Reason*, or an *ancient Tradition* from their *Fathers* : whereas we *Christians* do appeal to express *Divine Revelation* for what we believe in this matter, and do believe it singly upon that account.

V. It is besides very considerable, that the *Scriptures* do deliver this Doctrine of the *Trinity* without any manner of doubt or question concerning the *Unity* of the *Divine Nature* : And not only so, but do most stedfastly and constantly assert that there is but *One God* : And in those very *Texts*, in which these *three Differences* are mentioned, the *Unity* of the *Divine Nature* is expressly asserted ; as where *St. John* makes mention of the *Father*, the *Word*, and the *Spirit*, the *Unity* of these *Three* is likewise affirmed,

ed, *There are Three that bear record in Heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Spirit : And these Three are one.* SERM. XLVIII.

VI. It is yet further considerable, that from this *Mystery*, as delivered in *Scripture*, a Plurality of Gods cannot be inferr'd without making the *Scripture* grossly to contradict it self ; which I charitably suppose the *Socinians* would be as loth to admit as we our selves are. And if either *Councils*, or *Fathers*, or *Schoolmen*, have so explain'd this *Mystery* as to give any just ground, or so much as a plausible colour for such an Inference, let the blame fall where it is due, and let it not be charged on the *Holy Scriptures* ; but rather, as the *Apostle* says in another Case, *Let God be true, and every man a liar.*

VIIthly and lastly, I desire it may be consider'd, that it is not repugnant to reason to believe some things which are incomprehensible by our Reason ; provided that we have sufficient ground and reason for the belief of them : Especially if they be concerning *God*, who is in his Nature *incomprehensible* ; and we be well assured that he hath revealed them. And therefore it ought not to offend us that these *Differences* in the *Deity* are *incomprehensible* by our finite understandings ; because the *Divine Nature* it self is so, and yet the belief of *that* is the Foundation of all Religion.

There are a great many things in *Nature* which we cannot comprehend how they either are, or can be : As the *Continuity of Matter*, that is, how the parts of it do hang so fast together, that they are many times very hard to be parted ; and yet we are sure that it is so, because we see it every day. So likewise how the small *Seeds* of things contain the whole *Form* and *Nature* of the things from which they proceed and into which by degrees they grow ; and yet we plainly see this every year.

There are many things likewise in our *selves*, which no Man is able in any measure to comprehend,



SERM. XLVIII. hend, as to the manner how they are done and performed : As the *vital union* of *Soul* and *Body* : Who can imagine by what device or means a *Spirit* comes to be so closely united and so firmly link'd to a *material Body*, that they are not to be parted without great force and violence offer'd to Nature ? The like may be said of the operations of our several *Faculties* of *Sense* and *Imagination*, of *Memory* and *Reason*, and especially of the *Liberty* of our *Wills* : And yet we certainly find all these *Faculties* in our selves, though we cannot either comprehend or explain the particular manner in which the several Operations of them are performed.

And if we cannot comprehend the manner of those Operations which we plainly perceive and feel to be in our *selves*, much less can we expect to comprehend things without us ; and least of all can we pretend to comprehend the infinite *Nature* and *Perfections* of *God*, and every thing belonging to Him. For *God* himself is certainly the greatest *Mystery* of all other, and acknowledged by *Mankind* to be in his *Nature*, and in the particular manner of his existence, incomprehensible by human Understanding. And the reason of this is very evident, because *God* is infinite, and our knowledge and understanding is but finite : And yet no sober Man ever thought this a good reason to call the Being of *God* in question.

The same may be said of *God's* certain knowledge of future Contingencies which depend upon the uncertain Wills of free Agents : It being utterly inconceiveable how any Understanding, how large and perfect soever, can certainly know beforehand that which depends upon the *free Will* of another, which is an arbitrary and uncertain Cause.

And yet the *Scripture* doth not only attribute this Foreknowledge to *God*, but gives us also plain Instances of *God's* foretelling such things, many Ages before it happen'd, as could not come to pass but by the

Sins of Men, in which we are sure that God can have SERM.  
 no hand ; though nothing can happen without his XLVIII.  
 permission : Such was that most memorable Event  
 of the Death of *Christ*, who as the *Scripture* tells us,  
 was by *wicked hands crucified and slain* ; and yet e-  
 ven *this* is said to have happened according to the de-  
 terminate foreknowledge of God, and was punctually  
 foretold by Him some hundreds of years before.  
 Nay, the *Scripture* doth not only ascribe this power and  
 perfection to the *Divine Knowledge*, but *natural*  
*Reason* hath been forced to acknowledge it, as we  
 may see in some of the wisest of the *Philosophers*.  
 And yet it would puzzle the greatest *Philosopher* that  
 ever was to give any tolerable account how any  
 Knowledge whatsoever can certainly and infallibly  
 foresee an Event through uncertain and contingent  
 Causes. All the reasonable satisfaction that can be  
 had in this matter is this, that it is not at all unrea-  
 sonable to suppose that *infinite Knowledge* may have  
 ways of knowing things which our *finite Understand-*  
*ings* can by no means comprehend how they can  
 possibly be known.

Again, there is hardly any thing more inconcei-  
 vable than how a thing should be of it self, and with-  
 out any Cause of its Being ; and yet our Reason  
 compels us to acknowledge this ; because we certain-  
 ly see that something is, which must either have  
 been of it self, and without a Cause, or else some-  
 thing that we do not see must have been of it self,  
 and have made all other things : And by this reason-  
 ing we are forced to acknowledge a *Deity*, the Mind  
 of Man being able to find no rest but in the acknow-  
 ledgment of one *eternal and wise Mind* as the *Prin-*  
*ciple* and *first Cause* of all other things ; and this  
*Principle* is that which Mankind do by general con-  
 sent call *God*. So that God hath laid a sure founda-  
 tion of our acknowledgment of his Being in the  
 Reason of our own Minds. And tho' it be one of  
 the

SERM. the hardest things in the World to conceive how  
 XLVIII. any thing can be of itself, yet necessity drives us to  
 acknowledge it whether we will or no : And this  
 being once granted, our Reason, being tried in try-  
 ing all other ways, will for its own quiet and ease  
 force us at last to fall in with the general apprehensi-  
 on and belief of Mankind concerning a *Deity*.

To give but one Instance more : There is the like  
 Difficulty in conceiving *how any thing can be made*  
 out of nothing ; and yet our Reason doth oblige us  
 to believe it : Because *Matter*, which is a very im-  
 perfect Being and merely passive, must either always  
 have been of itself ; or else, by the infinite Power  
 of a most perfect and active Being, must have been  
 made out of nothing : Which is much more credi-  
 ble, than that any thing so imperfect as *Matter* is  
 should be of itself : Because that which is of itself  
 cannot be conceived to have any bounds and limits  
 of its Being and Perfection ; for by the same reason  
 that it necessarily is and of itself, it must necessari-  
 ly have all perfection, which it is certain *Matter* hath  
 not ; and yet necessary Existence is so great a Perfection,  
 that we cannot reasonably suppose any thing that  
 hath this Perfection to want any other.

Thus you see, by these Instances, that it is not  
 repugnant to Reason to believe a great many things  
 to be, of the manner of whose Existence we are not  
 able to give a particular and distinct account. And  
 much less is it repugnant to Reason to believe those  
 things concerning God which we are very well assured  
 he hath declared concerning himself, though these  
 things by our Reason should be incomprehensible.

And this is truly the Case as to the matter now  
 under debate : We are sufficiently assured that the  
*Scriptures* are a divine Revelation, and that this My-  
 stery of the Trinity is therein declared to us. Now  
 that we cannot comprehend it, is no sufficient Reason  
 not to believe it : For if this were a good Reason  
 for not believing it, then no Man ought to be-  
 lieve



ieve that there is a God, because his Nature is most SERM.  
 certainly incomprehensible. But we are assured by XLVIII.  
 many Arguments that there is a God ; and the same  
*natural Reason* which assures that *He is*, doth like-  
 wise assure us that *He is incomprehensible* ; and there-  
 fore our believing Him to be so doth by no means  
 overthrow our belief of his Being.

In like manner, we are assured by *Divine Revela-*  
*tion* of the Truth of this Doctrine of the *Trinity* ;  
 and being once assured of *that*, our not being able  
 fully to comprehend it is not reason enough to stag-  
 ger our belief of it. A Man cannot deny what he  
 sees, tho' the necessary consequence of admitting it  
 may be something which he cannot comprehend.  
 One cannot deny the Frame of this World which  
 he sees with his Eyes, though from thence it will  
 necessarily follow, that either *that* or something else  
 must be of itself ; which yet, as I said before, is  
 a thing which no Man can comprehend how it can  
 be.

And by the same Reason a Man must not deny  
 what God says, to be true ; though he cannot com-  
 prehend many things which God says : As particu-  
 larly concerning this *Mystery* of the *Trinity*. It  
 ought then to satisfy us, that there is sufficient e-  
 vidence that this doctrine is delivered in Scripture,  
 and that what is there declared concerning it doth  
 not imply a Contradiction. For why should our fi-  
 nite Understandings pretend to comprehend that  
 which is infinite, or to know all the real *Differences*  
 that are consistent with the Unity of an infinite Be-  
 ing ; or to be able fully to explain this *Mystery* by  
 any similitude or resemblance taken from *finite Be-*  
*ings* ?

But before I leave this Argument, I cannot but  
 take notice of one thing which they of the *Church* of  
*Rome* are perpetually objecting to us upon this occa-  
 sion. And it is this, That by the same reason that  
 we believe the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, we may and  
 must

SERM. must receive that of *Transubstantiation*. God forbid  
 XLVIII. Because of all the *Doctrines* that ever were in any  
 Religion, this of *Transubstantiation* is certainly the  
 most abominably absurd.

However, this *Objection* plainly shews how fondly and obstinately they are addicted to their own Errors, how mishapen and monstrous soever; insomuch that rather than the Dictates of their Church, how absurd soever, should be call'd in question, they will question the truth even of *Christianity* itself; and we will not take in *Transubstantiation*, and admit it to be a *necessary Article* of the *Christian Faith*, they grow so fullen and desperate that they matter not what becomes of all the rest: And rather than not have their Will of us in that which is *controverted* they will give up that which by their own confession is an *undoubted Article* of the *Christian Faith*, and not controverted on either Side; except only by the *Socinians*, who yet are hearty Enemies to *Transubstantiation*, and have exposed the absurdity of it with great advantage.

But I shall endeavour to return a more particular *Answer* to this *Objection*, and such a one as I hope will satisfy every considerate and unprejudic'd Mind: that after all this confidence and swaggering of theirs there is by no means equal reason either for the receiving or for the rejecting of these *two Doctrines* of the *Trinity* and *Transubstantiation*.

*First*, There is not equal reason for the belief of these *two Doctrines*. This *Objection*, if it be of any force, must suppose that there is equal evidence and proof from *Scripture* for these *two Doctrines*: But this we utterly deny, and with great reason; because it is no more evident from the words of *Scripture* that the *sacramental Bread* is substantially changed into *Christ's natural Body* by virtue of those words *This is my Body*, than it is, that *Christ* is substantially changed into a *natural Vine* by virtue of those words *John 15. 1. I am the true Vine*; or than that the

Rock in the Wilderness, of which the *Israelites* drank, **SERM.**  
 was substantially changed into the *Person of Christ*, **XLVIII.**  
 because it is expressly said, *that Rock was Christ*; or  
 than that the *Christian Church* is substantially chang-  
 ed into the *natural Body of Christ*, because it is in  
 express terms said of the *Church*, that *it is his Body*,  
 Eph. 1. 23.

But besides this, several of their own most learn-  
 ed *Writers* have freely acknowledged that *Transub-*  
*stantiation* can neither be directly proved, nor neces-  
 sarily concluded from Scripture: But this the *Wri-*  
*ters* of the *Christian Church* did never acknowledge  
 concerning the *Trinity*, and the *Divinity of Christ*;  
 but have always appealed to the clear and undenia-  
 ble Testimonies of *Scripture* for the proof of these  
*Doctrines*. And then the whole force of the Objec-  
 tion amounts to this, that if I am bound to believe  
 what I am sure God says, though I cannot compre-  
 hend it; then I am bound by the same reason to be-  
 lieve the greatest Absurdity in the World, though I  
 have no manner of assurance of any *divine Revelation*  
 concerning it. And if this be their meaning, though  
 we understand not *Transubstantiation*, yet we very  
 well understand what they would have, but cannot  
 grant it; because there is not equal reason to believe  
 two things, for *one* of which there is good proof,  
 and for the other no proof at all.

*Secondly*, Neither is there equal reason for the re-  
 jecting of these two *Doctrines*. This the Objection  
 supposes, which yet cannot be supposed but upon one  
 or both of these Two grounds: Either because these  
 two *Doctrines* are equally *incomprehensible*, or because  
 they are equally loaded with *Absurdities* and *Con-*  
*tradictions*.

The *first* is no good ground of rejecting any *Doc-*  
*trine*, merely because it is *incomprehensible*; as I have  
 abundantly shew'd already. But besides this, there  
 is a wide difference between plain matters of *Sense*,  
 and *Mysteries*, concerning God; and it does by no  
 means



SERM. means follow, that if a Man do once admit any  
 XLVIII. thing concerning God which he cannot comprehend

he hath no reason afterwards to believe what he himself sees. This is a most unreasonable and destructive way of arguing, because it strikes at the foundation of all Certainty, and sets every Man at liberty to deny the most plain and evident *Truths* of *Christianity*, if he may not be humour'd in having the absurdest things in the World admitted for true. The next step will be to persuade us, that we may as well deny the Being of *God* because his Nature is incomprehensible by our *Reason*, as deny *Transubstantiation* because it evidently contradicts our *Senses*.

2dly, Nor are these two *Doctrines* loaded with the like *Absurdities* and *Contradictions*: So far from this, that the Doctrine of the *Trinity*, as it is delivered in the *Scriptures*, and hath already been explain'd, hath no Absurdity, or Contradiction either involv'd in it, or necessarily consequent upon it: But the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation* is big with all imaginable Absurdity and Contradiction. And their own *Schoolmen* have sufficiently expos'd it; especially *Scotus*, and he designed to do so, as any Man that attentively reads him may plainly discover: For in his *Disputation* about it he treats this *Doctrine* with the greatest contempt, as a new Invention of the Council of *Lateran* under Pope *Innocent III.* To the *Decree* of which *Council* concerning it he seems to pay a formal submission, but really derides it as contrary to the common *Sense* and *Reason* of Mankind, and not at all supported by *Scripture*; as any one may easily discern that will carefully consider his manner of handling it and the result of his whole *Disputation* about it.

And now suppose there were some appearance of Absurdity and Contradiction in the Doctrine of the *Trinity* as it is delivered in *Scripture*, must we therefore believe a Doctrine which is not at all revealed in *Scripture*, and which hath certainly in it all the

absurdities

absurdities in the World, and all the Contradictions SERM. XLVIII  
 to Sense and Reason; and which once admitted, doth at once destroy all Certainty? Yes, say they, why not? since we of the Church of Rome are satisfy'd that this Doctrine is reveal'd in Scripture; or, if it be not, is defin'd by the Church, which is every whit as good. But is this equal, to demand of us the belief of a thing which hath always been controverted, not only between us and them, but even among themselves, at least till the Council of Trent? And this upon such unreasonable terms that we must either yield this Point to them, or else renounce a Doctrine agreed on both Sides to be reveal'd in Scripture.

To shew the unreasonableness of this proceeding, Let us suppose a Priest of the Church of Rome pressing a Jew or Turk to the belief of Transubstantiation, and because one kindness deserves another, the Jew or Turk should demand of him the belief of all the Fables in the Talmud, or in the Alchoran; since none of these, nor indeed all of them together, are near so absurd as Transubstantiation: Would not this be much more reasonable and equal than what they demand of us? Since no absurdity, how monstrous and big forever, can be thought of which may not enter into an Understanding in which a Breach hath been already made wide enough to admit Transubstantiation. The Priests of Baal did not half so much deserve to be expos'd by the Prophet for their Superstition and Folly, as the Priests of the Church of Rome do for this senseless and stupid Doctrine of theirs with a hard Name. I shall only add this one thing more, That if this Doctrine were possible to be true, and clearly prov'd to be so; yet it would be evidently useless and to no purpose. For it pretends to change the substance of one thing into the substance of another thing that is already, and before this change is pretended to be made. But to what purpose? Not to make the Body of Christ, for that was already in Being; and the Substance of the Bread is lost, nothing of it remaineth but

SERM. *Accidents*, which are good for nothing, and indeed are  
 XLVIII. nothing when the Substance is destroy'd and gone.

~~~~~ All that now remains, is to make some *practical Inferences* from this *Doctrine* of the *Unity* of the *Divine Nature*. And they shall be the same which God himself makes by *Moses*, *Deut.* 6. 4. which *Text* is also cited by our *Saviour*, *Mark* 12. 29, 30, 31. *Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is one Lord; and thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: And thou shalt love thy neighbour as thy self.* So that according to our *Saviour* the whole *Duty* of *Man*, the *love of God*, and of our *neighbour*, is founded in the *Unity* of the *Divine Nature*.

I. The *love of God*: *The Lord thy God is one Lord*, therefore *thou shalt love him with all thy heart, &c. this is the first and great Commandment*: And it comprehends in it all the *Duties* of the *first Table* as naturally flowing from it. As that we should *serve him only*, and pay no *Religious Worship* to any but to *Him*. For to pay *Religious Worship* to any thing is to make it a *God*, and to acknowledge it for such; And therefore *God* being but *One*, we can give *Religious Worship* to none but to *Him* only. And among all the parts of *Religious Worship* none is more peculiarly appropriated to the *Deity* than *solemn Invocation* and *Prayer*. For he to whom *Men* address their *Requests*, at all times, and in all places, must be supposed to be always every where present, to understand all our *Desires* and *Wants* and to be able to supply them; and this *God* only is, and can do.

So likewise from the *Unity* of the *Divine Nature* may be inferr'd, that we should not worship *God* by any *sensible Image* or *Representation*: Because *God* being a *singular Being* there is nothing like *Him*, or that can without injuring and debasing his most *spiritual* and *perfect* and *immense Being* be compared to *Him*: As *He* himself speaks in the *Prophet*, *Isa.* 46. 5. *To whom will ye liken me, saith the Lord, and make*

ne equal? And therefore with no *Distinction* what-
 ever can it be lawful to give *Religious Worship*, or
 any part of it, to any but *God*: We can *pray* to none
 but to *Him*, because *He only* is every where present,
 and 1 *Kings* 8. 39. *only knows the Hearts of all the*
children of Men; which *Solomon* gives as the Reason
 why we should address our Supplications to *God only*,
who dwelleth in the Heavens.

So that the Reason of these *two Precepts* is found-
 ed in the *Unity* and *Singularity* of the *Divine Nature*,
 and unless there be more *Gods* than *One*, we must
Worship Him only, and *pray* to none but *Him*: Be-
 cause we can give *Invocation* to none but to *Him only*
 whom we believe to be *God*; as *St. Paul* reasons,
Rom. 10. 14. *How shall they call on Him in whom they*
have not believed?

II. The *love* likewise of our *Neighbour* is founded
 in the *Unity* of the *Divine Nature*, and may be in-
 terr'd from it: *Hear, O Israel, the Lord thy God is*
One Lord, therefore thou shalt love thy Neighbour
as thy self. And the *Apostle* gives this reason why
Christians should be at unity among themselves;
Eph. 4. 6. *There is one God and Father of all*, and
 therefore we should *keep the unity of the Spirit in the*
bond of Peace; that is, live in mutual love and peace.
 The *Prophet* likewise assigns this reason why all Man-
 kind should be upon good terms with one another,
 and not be injurious one to another, *Mal.* 2. 10.
Have we not all One Father? hath not one God created
us? Why do we then deal treacherously every man against
his Brother?

And therefore when we see such hatred and enmi-
 ty among *Men*, such divisions and animosities among
Christians, we may not only ask *St. Paul's* question,
Is Christ divided? that we cannot agree about ser-
 ving him; either all to serve him one way, or to
 quarrel with one another in our differences: I say, we
 may not only ask *St. Paul's* question, *Is Christ divi-*
ded? but may ask further, *Is God divided?* Is there

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XLVIII. Are we not all the Sons of *Adam*, who was the Son of God? So that if we trace ourselves to our Original, we shall find a great nearness and equality among Men: And this equality that we are all God's *Creatures* and *Image*, and that the *One only God* is the *Father of us all*, is a more real ground of mutual love, and peace, and equity in our dealings one with another, than any of those petty differences and distinctions of *strong* and *weak*, of *rich* and *poor*, of *wise* and *foolish*, of *base* and *honourable*, can be to encourage Men to any thing of *Insolence*, *Injustice*, and *inequality of dealing* one towards another. Because that wherein we all agree, that we are the *Creatures* and *Children of God*, and have all one common *Father*, is essential and constant; but those things wherein we differ are accidental and mutable, and happen to one another by turns.

Thus much may suffice to have been spoken concerning the *first Proposition* in the *Text*, *There is one God*. To Him, *Father*, *Son*, and *Holy Ghost*, be all Honour and Glory, Dominion and Power, now and for ever *Amen*.

OF
STEDFASTNESS
IN
RELIGION.

VOL. III.

A

THE
P R E F A C E
T O T H E
R E A D E R.

BEING, I hope, for the remainder of my Life, released from that irksome and unpleasant work of Controversy and Wrangling about Religion, I shall now turn my Thoughts to something more agreeable to my Temper, and of a more direct and immediate tendency to the promoting of true Religion, to the happiness of human Society, and the Reformation of the World.

I have no intention to reflect upon any that stand up in defence of the Truth and contend earnestly for it, endeavouring in the spirit of meekness to reclaim those that are in Error. For I doubt not but a very good Man may upon several occasions be almost unavoidably engaged in Controversies of Religion; and if he have a Head clear and cool enough, so as to be Master of his own Notions and Temper in that hot kind of Service, he may therein do considerable advantage to the Truth: Though a Man that hath once drawn Blood in Controversy, as Mr. Mede expresseth it, is seldom known ever perfectly to recover his own good Temper afterwards.

For this reason a good Man should not be very willing, when his Lord comes, to be found so doing, and as it were beating his fellow-servants: And all Controversy, as it is usually managed, is little better. A

good

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good Man would be loth to be taken out of the World reeking hot from a sharp Contention with a perverse Adversary; and not a little out of countenance, to find himself in this temper translated into the calm and peaceable Regions of the Blessed, where nothing but perfect charity and goodwill reign for ever.

I know not whether St. Paul, who had been taken up into the third Heavens, did by that Question of his, Where is the Disputer of THIS WORLD? intend to insinuate that this wrangling work hath place only in this World, and upon this Earth where only there is a Dust to be raised; but will have no place in the Other. But whether St. Paul intended this or not, the thing it self I think is true, that in the other World all things will be clear and past dispute. To be sure, among the Blessed; and probably also among the Miserable, unless fierce and furious Contentions, with great Heat without Light, about things of no moment and concernment to them, should be design'd for a part of their Torment.

As to the following Sermons, I am sensible that the Style of them is more loose and full of words, than is agreeable to just and exact Discourses: But so I think the Style of Popular Sermons ought to be. And therefore I have not been very careful to mend this matter; chusing rather that they should appear in that native simplicity in which, so many Years ago, they were first fram'd, than dress'd up with too much care and art. As they are, I hope the candid and ingenuous Readers will take them in good part.

And I do heartily wish that all that are concern'd in the respective Duties, treated on in the following Sermons, would be persuaded so to lay them to heart as to put them effectually in practice: That how much soever the Reformation of this corrupt and degenerate Age in which we live is almost utterly to be despair'd of, we may yet have a more comfortable prospect of future Times, by seeing the foundation of a better World begun to be laid in the careful and conscientious discharge of

The Preface to the Reader.

the Duties here mention'd : That by this means the Generations to come may know God, and the Children yet unborn may fear the Lord.

I have great reason to be sensible how fast the infirmities of Age are coming upon me, and therefore must work the Works of Him, whose Providence hath placed me in the Station wherein I am, whilst it is Day, because the Night cometh when no man can work.

I knew very well, before I enter'd upon this great and weighty Charge, my own manifold defects, and how unequal my best abilities were for the due discharge of it ; but I did not feel this so sensibly as I now do every day more and more. And therefore that I might make some small amends for greater failings, I knew not how better to place the broken hours I had to spare from almost perpetual business of one kind or other, than in preparing something for the Publick that might be of use to recover the decayed Piety and Virtue of the present Age ? in which iniquity doth so much abound, and the Love of God and Religion is grown so cold.

To this end I have chosen to publish these plain Sermons, and to recommend them to the serious perusal and faithful practice both of the Pastors and People committed to my Charge ; earnestly beseeching Almighty God, that by his Blessing they may prove effectual to that good end for which they are sincerely design'd.

SERMON

(165)

SERMON XLIX.

Concerning Resolution and Stedfastness
in Religion.

*Preached at St. LAWRENCE-JEWRY,
June 3. 1684.*

JOSHUA XXIV. 15.

*-----But as for me and my house, we will serve
the Lord.*

AFTER *Joshua* had brought the People of SERM.
Israel into the promised Land and settled XLIX.
them in the quiet possession of it, his great
desire was to establish them in the true Re-
ligion, namely, in the Worship of the One true
God, who hath brought them out of the Land of
Egypt, and given them the possession of that good
Land, the Land of *Canaan*.

And now finding himself weak and declining,
being an hundred and ten Years old, and fearing
left after his death the People should fall off from
the true Religion to the worship of Idols, he like
a wise and good Governor considers with himself
what course he had best to take to keep them firm
and stedfast in their Religion, and to prevent their
defection to the Idolatry of the Nations round a-
bout them.

And to this end he calls a general assembly of *all*
Israel, Chap. 23. V. 1. that is, of the Elders, and
Heads, and Judges, and Officers of the several Tribes ;
and in a very wise and eloquent Speech represents to
A 3 them

SERM. them in what a miraculous manner God had driven
 XLIX. *out the Nations before them, much greater and stronger*
 Nations than they, and had given them their Land
 to possess it. And in a word, had performed punctu-
 ally all that he had promised to them.

And therefore they ought to take great heed to them-
 selves, to love God and to serve Him; and if they did
 not, he tells them that it should come to pass, that as all
 good things are come upon you which the Lord your God
 promised you, so shall the Lord bring upon you all evil
 things, until he have destroyed you from off this good
 Land which the Lord your God hath given you, Chap.
 23. 15.

After this, he calls them together a second time,
 and gives them a brief historical account and deduc-
 tion of the great Mercies of God to them and their
 Fathers, from the days of Abraham, whom he had
 called out from among his Idolatrous Kindred and
 Countrymen, unto that Day.

From the consideration of all which, he earnestly
 exhorts them to renew their covenant with God;
 and for his particular satisfaction, before he left the
 World, solemnly to promise that they would for ever
 serve God and forsake the service of Idols: *Now*
therefore fear the Lord, and serve Him in sincerity
and in truth: And put away the Gods which your Fa-
thers served on the other side of the Flood, and in Egypt;
and serve ye the Lord.

And then in the Text, by a very elegant Scheme of
 Speech he does, as it were, once more set them at li-
 berty; and, as if they had never engaged themselves
 to God by Covenant before, he leaves them to their
 free choice: *And if it seem evil unto you to serve the*
Lord, chuse you this day whom ye will serve; whether
the Gods whom your Fathers served on the other side
of the Flood, or the Gods of the Amorites in whose Land
ye dwell.

Not that they were at liberty whether they would
 serve the true God, or not; but to insinuate to them
 that

that Religion ought to be their free choice : And **SERM.**
likewise, that the true Religion hath those real ad-**XLIX.**
vantages on its Side, that it may safely be referr'd to
any considerate Man's choice : *If it seem evil unto*
you ; as if he had said, If after all the demonstrati-
ons which God hath given of his Miraculous Pre-
sence among you, and the mighty obligations which
he hath laid upon you by bringing you out of the
Land of Egypt, and the *House of Bondage* by so out-
stretched an Arm ; and by driving out the Nations
before you and giving you their Land to possess : If
after all this, you can think it fit to quit the service
of *this God*, and to worship the *Idols* of the Nations
whom you have subdued, those vanquished and bas-
tled Deities : If you can think it reasonable so to do,
but surely you cannot ; then take your choice : *If it*
seems evil unto you to serve the Lord, chuse you this
day whom ye will serve.

And to direct and encourage them to make a
right choice, he declares to them his own Resoluti-
on, which he hopes will also be theirs ; and as he
had heretofore been their *Captain*, so now he offers
himself to be their *Example* : But whether they will
follow him or not, he for his part is fix'd and im-
movable in this Resolution ; *But as for Me and my*
house, we will serve the Lord.

In effect he tells them ; I have proposed the best
Religion to your choice, and I cannot but think,
nay I cannot but hope, that you will all stedfastly ad-
here to it. It is so reasonable and wise, so much your
Interest and your Happiness to do it. But if you
should do otherwise, if you should be so weak as not
to discern the Truth, so wilful and so wicked as not
to embrace it : Though you should all make another
choice, and run away from the true God to the wor-
ship of Idols ; I for my part am stedfastly resolved
what to do : In a case so manifest, in a matter so rea-
sonable, no Number, no Example shall prevail with
me to the contrary ; I will, if need be, stand alone

SERM. in that which is so evidently and unquestionably
 XLIX. Right: And though this whole Nation should revolt
 ~~~~~ all at once from the Worship of the true God, and  
 join with the rest of the World in a false Religion  
 and in the Worship of Idols; and mine were the  
 only Family left in all *Israel*, nay in the whole  
 World, that continued to worship the God of *Israel*,  
 I would still be of the same mind; I would still per-  
 sist in this Resolution, and act according to it; *As*  
*for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.*

A Resolution truly worthy of so great a Prince  
 and so good a Man: In which he is a double Pat-  
 tern to us.

*First*, Of the brave Resolution of a good Man,  
 namely, That if there were occasion, and things  
 were brought to that extremity, he would stand a-  
 lone in the Profession and Practice of the true Re-  
 ligion: *As for Me, I will serve the Lord.*

*Secondly*, Of the pious Care of a good Father and  
 Master of a Family, to train up those under his Charge  
 in the true Religion and Worship of God: *As for me*  
*and My House, we will serve the Lord.*

I shall at this time, by God's assistance, treat of  
 the *First* of these, namely,

1<sup>st</sup>. Of the brave Resolution of a good Man, that  
 if there were occasion, and things were brought to  
 that extremity, he would stand alone in the Professi-  
 on and Practice of God's true Religion. *Chuse you*  
*this day, says Joshua, whom ye will serve; but as for*  
*Me, I will serve the Lord.* Joshua here puts the  
 Case at the utmost extremity, that not only the great  
 Nations of the World, the *Egyptians* and *Chaldeans*,  
 and all the lesser Nations round about them, and in  
 whose Land they dwelt, were all long since revol-  
 ted to *Idolatry*, and pretended great Antiquity and  
 long Prescription for the Worship of their false Gods:  
 But he supposeth yet further, That the only true and  
 visible Church of God then known in the World,  
 the People of *Israel*, should likewise generally revolt  
 and

and forsake the Worship of the *true God*, and cleave to the Service of *Idols*: Yet in this Case, if we could suppose it to happen, he declares his firm and stedfast Resolution to adhere to the Worship of the true God: And though all others should fall off from it, that he would stand alone in the Profession and Practice of the true Religion: *But as for Me, I will serve the Lord.*

In the handling of this Argument I shall do these two things,

*First*, I shall consider the *matter* of this Resolution, and the due *bounds* and *limits* of it.

*Secondly*, I shall endeavour to vindicate the *reasonableness* of this Resolution from the *Objections* to which this singular and peremptory kind of Resolution may seem liable.

*First*, I shall consider the *matter* of this Resolution, and the due *bounds* and *limits* of it.

*1st.* The *matter* of this Resolution. *Joshua* here resolves that if need were, and things were brought to that pass, he would stand alone, or with very few adhering to him, in the Profession and Practice of the true Religion. And this is not a mere Supposition of an impossible Case, which can never happen: For it may, and hath really and in fact happen'd in several Ages and Places of the World.

There hath been a general Apostacy of some great part of God's Church from the Belief and Profession of the true Religion to *Idolatry*, and to *damnable Errors and Heresies*: And some good Men have, upon the matter, stood alone in the open Profession of the true Religion, in the midst of this general Defection from it.

*Elijah* in that general Revolt of the People of *Israel*, when they had *forsaken the Covenant of the Lord*, and *broken down his Altars*, and *slain his Prophets*, and *he only*, as he thought, *was left to stand alone*. I say, in this Case, when, as he verily believed, he had no body to stand by him, *he was very zealous for the Lord God of Hosts*, 1 Kings, 18. 18. and with

an

SERM. an undaunted courage stood up for the Worship of  
 XLIX. the true God, and reprov'd *Abab* to his face for his  
 defection to the Worship of *Idols*.

And those *three* brave *Youths*, in the Prophecy of *Daniel*, chap. 3. did in the like resolute and undaunted manner refuse to obey the Command of the great King *Nebuchadnezzar*, to worship the Image which he had set up; when all others submitted and paid Honour to it: Telling him plainly, *If it be so, our God whom we serve is able to deliver us from the burning fiery Furnace; and He will deliver us out of thy hand: If not, be it known unto thee, O King, that we will not serve thy Gods, nor worship the golden Image which thou hast set up*, v. 17, 18.

In like manner, and with the same spirit and courage, *Daniel* withstood the Decree of *Darius*, which forbade men to ask a Petition of any God or man for thirty days, save of the King only; Dan. 6. 7. and this under the pain of being cast into the Den of Lions: and when all others gave obedience to it, he set open the windows of his Chamber towards *Jerusalem*, and kneeled down upon his knees three times a day, and prayed and gave thanks, as he did afore time, v. 10.

In the prevalency of the *Arian* Heresy *Athanasius* almost stood alone in the profession and maintenance of the Truth. And in the Reign of *Antichrist* the true Church of God is represented by a *Woman* flying into the *Wilderness*, and living there in obscurity for a long time; insomuch that the Professors of the Truth should hardly be found. And yet during that Degeneracy of so great a part of the *Christian* Church, and the prevalency of *Antichrist* for so many Ages, some few in every Age did appear who did resolutely own the Truth and bear witness to it with their Blood: But these did almost stand alone and by themselves, like a few scattered Sheep wandering up and down in a wide *Wilderness*.

Thus, in the height of *Popery*, *Wickliffe* appeared here in *England*; and *Hierome* of *Prague* and  
*John*



*John Huss* in *Germany* and *Bohemia*. And in the be-  
ginning of the Reformation, when *Popery* had quite  
over-run these *Western Parts* of the World and sub-  
dued her Enemies on every side, and *Antichrist* late  
securely in the quiet possession of his Kingdom; *Lu-*  
*ther* arose, a bold and rough Man, but a fit *Wedge*  
to cleave in sunder so hard and knotty a Block; and  
appeared stoutly against the gross *Errors* and *Corrup-*  
*tions* of the Church of *Rome*; and for along time  
stood alone, and with a most invincible spirit and  
courage maintained his ground and resisted the uni-  
ted malice and force of *Antichrist* and his *Adherents*;  
and gave him so terrible a Wound, that he is not yet  
perfectly healed and recovered of it.

So that for a Man to stand alone, or with a very few  
adhering to him and standing by him, is not a mere  
imaginary Supposition, but a Case that has really and  
in fact happened in several Ages and Places of the  
World. Let us then proceed to consider in the

2d. place, The due *limits* and *bounds* of this pe-  
remptory Resolution. In all matters of *Faith* and  
*Practice* which are *plain* and *evident* either from *na-*  
*tural Reason*, or from *divine Revelation*, this *Resolu-*  
*tion* seems to be very reasonable: But in things *doubt-*  
*ful* a modest man, and every man hath reason to be  
so, would be very apt to be stagger'd by the judg-  
ment of a very wise man; and much more of many  
such, and especially by the unanimous Judgment of  
the generality of Men; the general Voice and Opi-  
nion of Mankind being next to the Voice of God  
himself.

For in matters of an *indifferent* nature, which God  
hath neither commanded nor forbidden, such as are  
many of the *Circumstances* and *Ceremonies* of God's  
Worship, a man would not be so singular, much less  
stiff and immoveable in his singularity; but would be  
apt to yield and surrender himself to the *general Vote*  
and *Opinion*, and to comply with the *common Custom*  
and *Practice*; and much more with the *Rules* and  
Con-

SERM.  
XLIX.

SERM. XLIX. *Constitutions of Authority, whether Civil or Ecclesiastical.* Because in things *lawful* and *indifferent*, we are bound by the Rules of *Decency* and *Civility* not to thwart the *general Practice*; and by the *Commands of God*, we are certainly obliged to obey the *lawful Commandments of lawful Authority*.

But in things plainly contrary to the evidence of *Sense* or *Reason*, or to the *Word of God*, a man would compliment no Man, or Number of Men; nor would he pin his Faith upon any *Church* in the World; much less upon any *single Man*, no not the *Pope*; no, though there were never so many probable Arguments brought for the proof of his *Infallibility*.

In this Case a Man would be *singular*, and stand alone against the whole World; against the wrath and rage of a *King* and all the terrors of his *fiery Furnace*; as in other matters, a Man would not believe all the *learned Men* in the World against the clear evidence of *Sense* and *Reason*. If all the great *Mathematicians* of all Ages, *Archimides*, and *Euclid*, and *Apollonius*, and *Diophantus*, &c. could be supposed to meet together in a *general Council*, and should there declare in the most *solemn* manner, and give it under their *Hands* and *Seals*, that *twice two did not make four, but five*; this would not move me in the least to be of their mind; nay, I who am no *Mathematician* would maintain the contrary, and would persist in it without being in the least startled by the positive Opinion of these great and *learned men*; and should most certainly conclude, that they were either all of them out of their Wits or that they were by-*assed* by some interest or other, and swayed against the clear evidence of Truth and the full conviction of their own Reason to make such a determination as this. They might indeed over-rule the Point by their Authority, but in my inward judgment I should still be where I was before.

Just

Just so in matters of *Religion*, if any Church, SERM. XLIX.  
though with never so glorious and confident a pre-  
tence of *Infallibility*, should declare for *Transubstan-*  
*tiation*, that is, that the *Bread* and *Wine* in the Sa-  
crament, by vertue of the *Consecration* of the *Priest*,  
are substantially changed into the *natural Body* and  
*Blood of Christ*; this is so notoriously contrary both  
to the *Sense* and *Reason* of Mankind, that a Man  
should chuse to stand single in the opposition of it,  
and laugh at or rather pity the rest of the World  
that could be so servilely blind as seemingly to con-  
spire in the belief of so monstrous an *Absurdity*.

And in like manner, if any Church should declare,  
that *Images* are to be worshipped, or that the Wor-  
ship of God is to be performed in an *unknown Tongue*;  
and that the *H. Scriptures*, which contain the Word  
and Will of God, and teach Men what they are to  
believe and do in order to their eternal Salvation, are  
to be lock'd up and kept concealed from the People  
in a Language which they do not understand, lest if  
they were permitted the free use of them in their  
*Mother Tongue* they should know more of the Mind  
and Will of God than is convenient for the common  
People to know, whose *Devotion* and *Obedience* to  
the Church does mainly depend upon their *Ignorance*:  
Or should declare, that the *Sacrifice of Christ* was  
not offer'd *once for all*, but is and ought to be repeat-  
ed ten Millions of times every Day: And that the  
People ought to receive the *Communion in one kind on-*  
*ly*, and the *Cup* by no means to be trusted with them  
for fear the *profane Beards* of the *Laity* should drink  
of it: And that the *saving efficacy* of the *Sacraments*  
doth depend upon the *intention of the Priest*, without  
which the Receiver can have no benefit by them:  
These are all of them so plainly contrary to *Scripture*,  
and most of them in *Reason* so absurd, that the Au-  
thority of no Church whatsoever can oblige a man  
to the belief of them.

Nay,



SERM. Nay, I go yet further, that being evidently contrary to the Doctrine of the Gospel, tho' an *Apostle*,  
 XLIX. or an *Angel from Heaven* should declare them, we ought to reject them. And for this I have St. Paul's authority and warrant, who speaking of some that perverted the Gospel of Christ by teaching things contrary to it, *Though we*, says he, *or an Angel from Heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed: As we said before, so say I now again, though an Apostle, though an Angel from Heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that which ye have received, let him be accursed,* Gal. i. 7, 8, 9. You see he repeats it over again, to express not only his own confident assurance, but the certainty of the thing. And here is an *Anathema* with a witness, which we may confidently oppose to all the *Anathema's* which the Council of Trent hath so liberally denounced against all those who shall presume to gainsay these *New Doctrines* of their Church; which are in truth *another Gospel*, than that which our *blessed Saviour* and his *Apostles* taught: and yet on their Side there is neither an *Apostle*, nor an *Angel from Heaven* in the case.

To give but one *Instance* more: If *Bellarmin* shall tell me, as he expressly does, that *if the Pope should declare Virtue to be Vice, and Vice to be Virtue, I were bound to believe him unless I would sin against Conscience:* And if all the World should say the same that *Bellarmin* does, namely, that this *infallible Declarer* of *Virtue* and *Vice* were to be believed and followed; yet I could not possibly be of their mind, for this plain and undeniable Reason; because if *Virtue* and *Vice* be all one, then Religion is nothing; since the main Design of Religion is to teach men the difference between *Virtue* and *Vice*, and to oblige them to practise the *one* and to refrain from the *other*: And if Religion be nothing, then Heaven and Hell are nothing: And if Heaven be nothing, then an *infallible Guide* thither is of no use and to no manner of purpose;

purpose; because he is a Guide no whither, and so his great Office ceases and falls of it self. SERM.  
XLIX.

And now lest any should think me singular in this Assertion, and that thereby I give a great deal too much to the single Judgment of private Persons, and too little to the Authority of a Church, I will produce the deliberate Judgment of a very learned Man and a great Assertor of the Church's Authority, concerning the matter I am now speaking of: I mean Mr. Hooker, in his deservedly admired *Book of Ecclesiastical Policy*. His Words are these, *I grant, says he, that Proof derived from the Authority of Man's Judgment is not able to work that Assurance which doth grow by a stronger proof: and therefore although ten thousand general Councils should set down one and the same definitive Sentence concerning any point of Religion whatsoever, yet one demonstrative Reason alledged, or one Testimony cited from the Word of God himself to the contrary, could not chuse but oversway them all: In as much as for them to be deceived it is not so impossible, as it is that demonstrative Reason or divine Testimony should deceive.*

And again, *For men, says he, to be ty'd and led by Authority, as it were with a kind of Captivity of Judgment, and though there be Reason to the contrary not to listen to it, but follow like Beasts the first in the Herd, this were brutish.*

Again, *That the Authority of Men should prevail with Men, either against or above Reason is no part of Our Belief. Companies of learned Men, though they be never so great and reverend, are to yield unto Reason, the weight whereof is no whit prejudiced by the simplicity of the Person which doth alledge it; but being found to be sound and good, the bare Opinion of men to the contrary must of necessity stoop and give place.* And this he delivers not only as his own particular Judgment, but that which he apprehended to be the Judgment of the Church of England.

I have produced these clear and positive Testimonies

SERM. *nies* of so learned and judicious a Person, and of so  
 XLIX. great esteem in our Church, on purpose to prevent  
 any misapprehension, as if by this Discourse I intend-  
 ed to derogate from the Authority of the Church  
 and her just and reasonable Determinations, in things  
 no wise contrary to plain *Reason* or the *Word of God*.  
 And beyond this pitch no judicious *Protestant*, that  
 I know of, ever strain'd the Authority of the Church.  
 I proceed now in the

2d. place, To vindicate the *Reasonableness* of this  
*Resolution* from the *Objections* to which this *singular*  
 and *peremptory* kind of *Resolution* may seem liable.

*Obj. 1. First*, it may very speciously be said, that  
 this does not seem modest for a Man to set up his own  
 private Judgment against the general Suffrage and  
 Vote. And it is very true, as I said before, that  
 about things *indifferent* a Man should not be stiff and  
 singular; and in things *doubtful* and *obscure* a Man  
 should not be over-confident of his own Judgment,  
 and insist peremptorily upon it against the general  
 Opinion: But in things that are plain and evident,  
 either from *Scripture* or *Reason*, it is neither im-  
 modesty nor a culpable singularity, for a Man to stand  
 alone in the defence of the Truth. Because in such  
 a Case a Man does not oppose his own single and  
 private Judgment to the Judgment of *Many*, but  
 the common Reason of Mankind and the Judgment  
 of God plainly declared in his Word.

If the generality of men should turn *Atheists* and  
*Infidels*, and should deny the *Being* of God, or his  
*Providence*; the *Immortality* of mens Souls, and the  
*Rewards* and *Punishments* of another World: Or  
 should deny the Truth of the *Gospel* and of the *Chri-*  
*stian* Religion, it would not certainly be any breach  
 of modesty for a man to appear single if no body  
 else would stand by him, in the resolute defence of  
 these great Truths.

In like manner, when a whole Church, tho' ne-  
 ver so large and numerous, shall conspire together



to corrupt the *Christian* Religion so far as to impose SERM.  
 upon Mankind, under the name of *Christian Doctrines* XLIX.  
 and *Articles of Faith*, things plainly contrary to the  
 Sense and Reason of Mankind, and to the clear and  
 express Word of God, why must a Man needs be  
 thought immodest, if he oppose such gross Errors  
 and Corruptions of the *Christian* Doctrine? And  
 what reason have the *Church of Rome* to talk of mo-  
 desty in this Case, when they themselves have the  
 face to impose upon Mankind the belief of things  
 contrary to what they and every Man else sees? As  
 they do in their Doctrine of Transubstantiation: And  
 to require of them to do what God hath expressly  
 forbidden, as the Worship of *Images*; besides  
 a great many other *Idolatrous* Practices of that  
 Church: To deny the People the free use of the *Ho-  
 ly Scriptures*, and the *publick Service* of God in a  
*known Tongue*; contrary to the very end and design  
 of all Religion, and in affront to the common Rea-  
 son and Liberty of Mankind.

*Obj. 2. Secondly*, It is pretended that it is more  
 prudent for private Persons to err with the Church,  
 than to be so pertinacious in their own Opinions.  
 To which I answer, that it may indeed be pardon-  
 able in some Cases to be led into mistake by the Au-  
 thority of those to whose Judgment and Instruction  
 we ought to pay a great deference and submission:  
 Provided always it be in things which are not plain  
 and necessary; but surely it can never be prudent to  
 err with any number, how great soever, in matters  
 of Religion which are of moment, merely for  
*Numbers* sake: But to comply with the *known Errors*  
 and *Corruptions* of any Church whatsoever is certain-  
 ly damnable.

*Obj. 3. Thirdly*, It is pretended yet further, that  
 Men shall sooner be excused in following the Church,  
 than any particular *Man* or *Set*. To this I answer,  
 that it is very true if the matter be doubtful, and  
 especially if the Probabilities be equal, or near equal

SERM. on both Sides : But if the Error be gross and palpa-  
 XLIX. ble, it will be no excuse to have followed any num-  
 W ber of Men, or any Church whatsoever. For here  
 the competition is not between Men and Men, but  
 between God and Men : And in this Case we must  
 forsake all Men to follow God and his Truth. *Thou*  
*shalt in no wise follow a Multitude in a known Error,*  
 is a Rule which in Reason is of equal obligation with  
 that *Divine Law, Thou shalt in no wise follow a Mul-*  
*titude to do evil* ; or rather is comprehended in it,  
 because to comply with a known Error is certainly to  
 do Evil.

And this very *Objection* the *Jews* made against  
 our *Blessed Saviour* and the Doctrine which he taught,  
 that the *Guides*, and *Governors* of the *Jewish Church*  
 did utterly differ from *Him*, and were of a contrary  
 mind, *Have any of the Rulers*, say they, *believed on*  
*him* ? What ? will you be wiser than your Rulers  
 and Governors ? What ? follow the Doctrine of *one*  
*single Man* against the unanimous Judgment and  
 Sentence of the *Great Sanhedrim*, to whom the Tri-  
 al of *Doctrines* and pretended *Prophets* doth of right  
 belong ?

But, as plausible as this *Objection* may seem to be,  
 it is to be considered that in a corrupt and degene-  
 rate Church the *Guides* and *Rulers* of it are com-  
 monly the worst, and the most deeply engaged in  
 the *Errors* and *Corruptions* of it. They brought  
 them in at first ; and their Successors, who have  
 been bred up in the belief and practice of them,  
 are concern'd to uphold and maintain them : And  
 so long a *Prescription* gives a kind of *Sacred Stamp*  
 even to *Error*, and an Authority not to be opposed  
 and resisted.

And thus it was in the corrupt State of the *Jewish*  
 Church, in our *Saviour's* Time : And so likewise in  
 that great Degeneracy of the *Christian Church*, in  
 the Times of *Popery*, *their rulers made them to err* :  
 Infomuch that when *Martin Luther* appeared in op-  
 position

position to the *Errors* and *Superstitions* of that Church, and was hard prest with this very *Objection* which the *Pharisees* urg'd against our *Saviour*, he was forc'd to bolt out a kind of unmannerly Truth, *Religio nunquam magis periclitatur quàm inter Reverendissimos*, Religion, says he, is never in greater hazard and worse treated, than amongst the most reverend; meaning the *Pope* and his *Cardinals*, and all the *Romish Hierarchy* who had their dependance upon them.

Obj. 4. Fourthly, it is Objected, That as on the one hand there may be danger of *Error* in following blindly the Belief of the Church, so on the other hand there is as great a danger of *Schism* in forsaking the Communion of the Church upon pretence of *Errors* and *Corruptions*. Very true; but where great *Errors* and *Corruptions* are not only pretended, but are real and evident: and where our Compliance with those *Errors* and *Corruptions* is made a necessary Condition of our Communion with that Church: In that Case, the guilt of *Schism*, how great a Crime soever it be, doth not fall upon those who forsake the Communion of that Church, but upon those who drive them out of it by the sinful Conditions which they impose upon them.

And this is truly the Case between Us and the Church of Rome, as we are ready to make good, and have fully done it upon all Occasions; and they have never yet been able to vindicate and clear themselves of those gross *Errors* and *Corruptions* which have been charged upon them, and which they require of all their Members as necessary Conditions of Communion with them here, and of eternal Salvation hereafter.

For we do not object to them doubtful matters, but things as plain as any that are contained in the Bible, as every body would see if they durst but let every body read it. The *Worship* of *Images* is there as plainly forbidden in the *Decalogue*, as *Murder* and



SERM. *Adultery* are. The *Communion* in both Kinds is as  
 XLIX. exprefs an *Institution* of our Saviour, as any in all  
 the *New Testament*; and even as the *Sacrament* of  
 the *Lord's Supper* it self; only that *Church* pretends  
 to a *Dispensing Power*, as a *Privilege inherent* in their  
 Church and inseparable from it.

And, to add but one *Instance* more; *Publick Prayers*, and the *Service* of God in an *unknown Tongue*, are as plainly and fully declared against by St. Paul, in a long *Chapter* upon this single Argument, as any one thing in all his *Epistles*.

These things are plain and undeniable, and being so, are a full Justification not only of the *Church* of *England*, in the *Reformation* which She thought fit to make within her self from the gross *Errors* and *Corruptions* of the *Church* of *Rome*; but likewise of particular Persons who have at any time for the same Reasons withdrawn themselves from her *Communion*, in any of the *Popish* Countries: Yea though that single Person should happen to be in those Circumstances that he could not have the Opportunity of holding *Communion* with any other Church, that was free from those *Errors* and *Corruptions*, and which did not impose them as necessary Conditions of *Communion*.

For if any Church fall off to *Idolatry*, every good *Christian* not only may, but ought to forsake *Her Communion*; and ought rather to stand single and alone in the Profession of the pure and true Religion, than to continue in the *Communion* of a corrupt and idolatrous Church.

I know that some Men are so fond of the Name of a Church that they can very hardly believe that any thing which bears that glorious Title can miscarry or do any thing so much amiss, as to give just occasion to any of her Members to break off from *Her Communion*: What? the Church err? That is such an Absurdity, as is by many thought sufficient to put any Objection out of countenance. That the

*whole Church*, that is, that all the *Christians* in the SERM. World should at any time fall off to *Idolatry* and in-XLIX. *Errors* and *Practices* directly contrary to the *Christian Doctrine* revealed in the *Holy Scriptures*, is on all hands, I think, denied: But that any Particular Church may fall into such *Errors* and *Practices* is, I think, as universally granted: Only in this Case they demanded to have the *Roman Catholick Church* excepted: And why I pray? Because that the *Roman Church* is a *Particular Church*, it is also the *Universal Church*: If this can be, and good sense can be made of a *Particular Universal Church*, then the *Roman Church* may demand this high Privilege of being exempted from the Fate of all other Churches; but if the *Roman Catholick*, that is a *Particular Universal Church* be a gross and palpable *Contradiction*, then it is plain that the *Church of Rome* hath no more pretence to this Privilege, than any other *particular Church* whatsoever.

And which is yet more, some men talk of these matters at that rate, as if a man who thought himself obliged to quit the Communion of the Church of *Rome*, should happen to be in those Circumstances that he had no Opportunity of joining himself to any other Communion, he ought in that Case to give over all thoughts of Religion, and not be so conceited and presumptuous as to think of going to Heaven alone by himself.

It is without doubt a very great Sin to despise the Communion of the Church, or to break off from it so long as we can continue in it without Sin: But if things should once come to that *Pass* that we must either disobey God for company, or stand alone in our obedience to him, we ought most certainly to obey God whatever comes of it; and to profess his Truth, whether any body else will join with us in that Profession or not.

And they who speak otherwise condemn the whole *Reformation*, and do in effect say that *Martin Luther* had

SERM. had done a very ill thing in breaking off from the  
 XLIX. *Church of Rome*, if no body else would have joined  
 with him in that honest Design. And yet if it had  
 been so, I hope God would have given him the  
 Grace and Courage to have stood alone in so good  
 and glorious a Cause, and to have laid down his Life  
 for it.

And for any man to be of another Opinion, is  
 just as if a man upon great deliberation should chuse  
 rather to be drowned, than to be saved either by a  
*Plank* or a *small Boat*, or to be carried into the  
 Harbour by any other way, than in a *Great Ship* of  
 so many hundred Tuns.

In short, a good man must resolve to obey God  
 and to profess his Truth, though all the World  
 should happen to do otherwise. *Christ* hath promi-  
 sed to preserve his Church *to the end of the World*,  
 that is, he hath engaged his Word that he will take  
 care that there shall always be, in some part of the  
 World or other, some Persons that shall make a sin-  
 cere Profession of his true Religion.

But he hath no where promised to preserve any  
 one Part of his Church from such *Errors* and *Cor-  
 ruptions*, as may oblige all good men to quit the  
 Communion of that Part; yea though when they  
 have done so, they may not know whither to resort  
 for actual Communion with any other sound Part of  
 the *Christian Church*. As it happened to some par-  
 ticular Persons, during the Reign and Rage of *Pe-  
 pery* in these *Western Parts* of the *Christian Church*.

The Result from all this *Discourse* is, to confirm  
 and establish us all, in this *Hour of Temptation* and of  
 the *Powers of Darkness*, in the well-grounded Belief  
 of the necessity and justice of our *Reformation* from  
 the *Errors* and *Corruptions* of the *Roman Church*.  
 And to engage us *to hold fast the Profession of our  
 Faith without wavering*: And not only to profess and  
 promise as *Peter* did our Lord, *though all Men for-  
 sake thee, yet will not I*: But if there should be Occa-  
 sion,



sion, to perform and make good this Promise with SERM.  
the hazard of all that is dear to us, and even of Life XLIX.  
itself. And whatever Trials God may permit any  
of us to fall into, to take up the pious Resolution of  
*Joshua* here in the *Text*, that whatever others do,  
*We will serve the Lord.*

I will conclude my *Discourse* upon this *First Particular* in the *Text*, with the *Exhortation* of *St. Paul* to the *Philippians*, chap. i. v. 27. *Only let your Conversation be as it becometh the Gospel of Christ. Stand fast in one Spirit, be of one Mind, striving together for the Faith of the Gospel. In nothing terrified by your Adversaries, which to them is an evident token of Perdition, but to you of Salvation, and that of God.*

And thus much may suffice to have spoken to the *First thing* in the *Text*, namely, the pious Resolution of *Joshua*, that if there were Occasion and things were brought to that Extremity, he would stand alone in the Profession and Practice of God's true Religion: *Chuse you this Day whom ye will serve, but as for Me, I will serve the Lord.*

I should now have proceeded to the *Second thing*, and which indeed I chiefly intended to speak to from this *Text*, namely, the pious Care of a good Father and Master of a Family, to train up those under his Charge in the Religion and Worship of the true God: *As for Me and My House we will serve the Lord.* But this I shall not now enter upon, but defer it to some other Opportunity. Consider what ye have heard, and the Lord give you Understanding in all things.

( 184 )

# S E R M O N L

Concerning FAMILY-RELIGION.

*Preached at St. LAWRENCE-JEWRY, June 3.  
1684.*

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JOSHUA XXIV. 15.

— *But as for me and my house, we will serve  
the Lord.*

SERM.  
L.

**I** SHALL now proceed to the *Second Point* contained in the *Text*, namely,  
II. The *pious Care* of a good *Master* and *Father* of a *Family*, to train up those under his Charge in the *Worship* and *Service* of the true God: *As for me and My House, we will serve the Lord.*

And this is the more necessary to be spoken to, because it is a great and very essential part of Religion, but strangely overlook'd and neglected in this loose and degenerate Age in which we live. It is a great part of Religion; for next to our *personal Homage* and *Service* to *Almighty God*, and the *Care* of our own Souls, it is incumbent upon us to make those, who are under our Charge and subject to our Authority, God's Subjects, and his Children and Servants; which is a much more honourable and happy Relation, than that which they bear to us.

Our *Children* are a *natural* part of ourselves, and the rest of our Family are a *Civil* and *Political* part: And not only we ourselves, but all that we have and that belongs to us is God's, and ought to be devoted to his Service. And they that have the true Fear of  
God

God themselves, will be careful to teach it to others; SERM.  
 to those especially who are under their more immediate Care and Instruction. L. And therefore God had  
 so great a confidence concerning *Abraham* as to this particular, as to undertake for him, that being so very good a man himself he would not fail in so great and necessary a part of his Duty, *For I know him,* says God of him, *that he will command his Children and his Household after him, and they shall keep the way of the Lord, to do justice and judgment.* God passeth his Word for him, that he would not only take care to instruct his *Children* and the rest of his numerous *Family* in the true Religion, but that he would likewise lay a strict Charge upon them to propagate and transmit it to their *Posterity*.

And this certainly is the Duty of all *Fathers* and *Masters of Families*; and an essential part of Religion, next to serving God in our own Persons, to be very careful that all that belong to us do the same. For every man must not only give an account of himself to God, but of those likewise that are committed to his Charge that they do not miscarry through his neglect.

In speaking of this great and necessary Duty I shall do these four things.

*First*, I shall shew wherein it doth consist.

*Secondly*, I shall consider our *Obligation* to it, both in point of *Duty* and of *Interest*.

*Thirdly*, I shall enquire into the *Causes* of the so common and shameful neglect of this *Duty*, to the exceeding great Decay of *Piety* amongst us.

*Fourthly*, As a *Motive* and *Argument* to us to endeavour to retrieve the practice of this Duty, I shall represent to you the pernicious *Consequences* of the neglect of it, both with regard to *ourselves*, and to the *Publick*. In all which I shall be very brief, because things that are plain need not to be long.

I. I shall shew wherein the Practice of this Duty doth consist. And in this I am sure there is no need  
 to



SERM. to be long, because this Duty is much better known  
 L. than practised. The principal *Parts* of it are these  
 following.

*First*, By setting up the constant Worship of God in our Families. By *daily Prayers* to God every *Morning* and *Evening*; and by reading some Portion of the *Holy Scriptures* at those *Times*, especially out of the *Psalms of David*, and the *New Testament*. And this is so necessary to keep alive and to maintain a sense of God and Religion in the minds of men, that where it is neglected I do not see how any Family can in reason be esteemed a Family of *Christians*, or indeed to have any Religion at all.

And there are not wanting excellent *Helps* to this purpose for those that stand in need of them, as I think most Families do for the due and decent discharge of this solemn Duty of *Prayer*: I say there are excellent *Helps* for this purpose, in the several *Books of Devotion* calculated for the private use of Families, as well as for *secret Prayer* in our *Closets*.

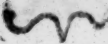
So that besides the reading of the *Holy Scriptures*, which are the great Fountains of *divine Truth*; we may do well likewise to add to these other pious and profitable *Books* which by their plainness are fitted for the Instruction of all Capacities in the most necessary points of *Belief* and *Practice*: Of which sort, God be thanked, there is an abundant store; but none that I think is more fitted for general and constant use than that *excellent Book* so well known by the *Title of the whole Duty of Man*: Because it is conveniently divided into *Parts* or *Sections*; one of which may be read in the *Family*, at any time when there is leisure for it; but more especially on the *Lord's Day*, when the whole Family may the more easily be brought and kept together, and have the opportunity to attend upon these things without distraction.

And, which I must by no means omit, because it is in many Families already gone, and in others going out of Fashion: I mean a solemn acknowledgment

ment of the Providence of God, by begging his *Blessing*, at our *Meals*, upon his good Creatures provided for our use; and by returning *Thanks* to him for the benefit and refreshment of them: This being a piece of *natural Religion* owned and practised in all Ages, and in most Places of the World; but never so shamefully and scandalously neglected, and I fear by many slighted and despised, as it is amongst us at this Day: And most neglected where there is greatest Reason for the doing of it, I mean at the most plentiful *Tables*, and among those of highest Quality: As if great Persons were ashamed, or thought scorn to own from whence these Blessings come; like the Nation of the *Jews*, of whom God complains in the *Prophet* Hof. 2. 8. *She knew not that I gave her Corn, and Wine, and Oyl, and multiplied her Silver and Gold: She knew not*, that is, she would not acknowledge from whose *Bounty* all these *Blessings* came: Or, as if the *poor* were obliged to thank God for a little, but those who are *fed to the full*, and whose *Cups overflow*, so that they are almost every day surfeited of Plenty, were not at least equally bound to make returns of thankful acknowledgment to the great *Giver* of all good things; and to implore *His* Bounty and Blessing, upon whom *the eyes of all do wait*, that *He may give them their meat in due season*.

O crooked and perverse Generation! Do you thus reason? Do ye thus requite the Lord, foolish and unwise? This is a very sad and broad sign of the prevalency of *Atheism* and *Infidelity* among us, when so *natural* and so *reasonable* a piece of *Religion*, so meet and equal an acknowledgment of the constant and daily Care and Providence of almighty God towards us begins to grow out of date and use, in a Nation professing Religion, and the Belief of the *Being* and Providence of God. Is it not a righteous thing with God to take away his Blessings from us, when we deny Him this just and easy Tribute of Praise and Thanksgiving? Shall not God visit for this horrible Ingratitude?

SERM. *Ingratitude? And shall not his Soul be avenged on such a*

L. *Nation as this? Hear, O Heavens, and be horribly*  
 *astonished at this! I hope it cannot be thought misbe-*  
 coming the meanest of God's Ministers, in a mat-  
 ter wherein the Honour of God is so nearly concern'd,  
 to reprove, even in the highest and greatest of the  
 Sons of Men, so shameful and heinous a Fault, with  
 a proportionable Vehemence and Severity.

*Secondly*, Another, and that also a very conside-  
 rable *Part* of this *Duty*, consists in instructing those  
 committed to our Charge in the *fundamental Princi-*  
*ples*, and in the careful *Practise* of the *necessary Duties*  
 of Religion; instilling these into *Children* in their  
 tender years, as they are capable of them, *line upon*  
*line*, and *precept upon precept*, *here a little and there a*  
*little*; and into those that are more grown up, by pro-  
 per and suitable means of instruction, and by furnish-  
 ing them with such *Books* as are most proper to teach  
 them those things in Religion which are most ne-  
 cessary by all to be believ'd and practis'd.

And in order hereunto we should take care that  
 those under our Charge, our *Children* and *Servants*,  
 should be taught to read, because this will make the  
 business of Instruction much easier; so that if they  
 are diligent and well dispos'd they may, after ha-  
 ving been taught the *first Principles* of Religion, by  
 reading the *Holy Scriptures* and other good *Books*,  
 greatly improve themselves, so as to be prepared to  
 receive much greater benefit and advantage by the  
 publick teaching of their Ministers.

And in this work of *Instruction* our great care  
 should be to plant those *Principles* of Religion in our  
*Children* and *Servants* which are most fundamental  
 and necessary, and are like to have the greatest and  
 most lasting influence upon their whole Lives: As  
 right and worthy Apprehensions of God, especially of  
 his infinite Goodness, and that *He is of purer eyes than*  
*to behold iniquity*: And a lively sense also of the great  
 evil and danger of Sin: A firm belief of the Immor-  
 tality



talities of our Souls, and of the unspeakable and endless Rewards and Punishments of another World. If these *Principles* once take root, they will spread strangely, and probably stick by them and continue with them all their Days. SERM. L.

Whereas if we plant in them *doubtful Doctrines* and *Opinions*, and inculcate upon them the *Notions* of a *Set*, and the *Fargon* of a *Party*, this will turn to a very pitiful account, and we must expect that our *Harvest* will be answerable to our *Husbandry*: *We have sown the Wind, and shall reap the Whirlwind.* But of this I shall have occasion to speak more particularly and fully in the ensuing *Sermons* concerning the good *Education of Children*.

And this work of *Instruction* of those that are under our Charge, as it ought not to be neglected at other Times, so is it more peculiarly seasonable on the *Lord's Day*, which ought to be employ'd by us to religious purposes, and in the Exercises of Piety and Devotion: Chiefly in the *publick Worship* and *Service* of God, upon which we should take care that our *Children* and *Servants* should diligently and devoutly attend. Because there God affords the *Means* which he hath appointed for the begetting and increasing of Piety and Goodness, and to which he hath promised a more especial Blessing: There they will have the opportunity of joining in the *publick Prayers* of God's Church, and of sharing in the unspeakable benefit and advantage of them: And there they will also have the advantage of being instructed by the Ministers of God in the Doctrine of Salvation, and the way to eternal Life; and of being powerfully incited to the practice of Piety and Virtue.

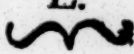
There likewise they will be invited to the *Lord's Table*, to participate of the *Holy Sacrament* of Christ's most blessed *Body* and *Blood*; which being the most solemn Institution of the *Christian Religion*, the frequent participation whereof is by our *Blessed Lord*, in remembrance of his *dying Love*, enjoined upon all *Christians*,

SERM. *Christians*, we ought to take a very particular care  
 L. that those who are under our Charge, so soon as they  
 are capable of it, be duly instructed and prepared for  
 it; that so as often as Opportunity is offer'd for it,  
 they may be present at this holy Action, and partake  
 of the inestimable Benefits and Comforts of it.

And when the *publick Worship* of *that Day* is over,  
 our Families should be instructed at *Home*, by having  
 the *Scriptures* and other good *Books* read to them;  
 and care likewise should be taken that they do this  
 themselves; this being the chief Opportunity that  
 most of them, especially those that are *Servants*, have  
 of minding Religion, and thinking seriously of an-  
 other World.

And therefore I cannot but think it of very great  
 consequence to the maintaining and keeping alive of  
 Religion in the World, that this *Day* be religiously  
 observ'd, and spent as much as may be in the exer-  
 cises of Piety, and in the care of our Souls. For  
 surely every one that hath a true sense of Religion will  
 grant, that it is necessary that some Time should be  
 solemnly set apart for this purpose, which is of all o-  
 ther our greatest Concernment: And they who ne-  
 glect this so proper Season and Opportunity, will  
 hardly find any other Time for it: Especially those  
 who are under the Government and Command of  
 others, as *Children* and *Servants*, who are seldom up-  
 on any other Day allowed to be so much Masters of  
 of their Time, as upon *this Day*.

*Thirdly*, I add further, as a considerable *Part* of  
 the *Duty* of *Parents* and *Masters* of *Families*, if they  
 be desirous to have their *Children* and *Servants* reli-  
 gious in good earnest, and would set them forward  
 in the way to Heaven, that they do not only allow  
 them Time and Opportunity, but that they do also  
 strictly and earnestly charge them to retire themselves  
 every Day, but more especially on the *Lord's Day*,  
 Morning and Evening, to *pray* to God for the For-  
 giveness of their Sins, and for his Mercy and Bless-  
 ings

sings upon them; and likewise to *praise* him for all SERM.  
his Favours and Benefits conferr'd upon them from L.  
day to day. 

And in order to this, they ought to take care that their *Children* and *Servants* be furnish'd with such short *Forms* of *Prayer* and *Praise*, as are proper and suitable to their capacities and conditions respectively; because there are but very few that know how to set about and perform these *Duties*, especially at first, without some *Helps* of this kind.

*Fourthly* and *Lastly*, another principle *Part* of this *Duty* consists in giving good *Example* to our *Families*. This was *David's* Resolution, *Psalms*. 101. 2. *I will behave my Self wisely in a perfect way, I will walk within my House with a perfect heart.* Take great care to be *exemplary* to thy Family in the best things; in a constant and devout serving of God, and in a sober and prudent and unblameable Conversation.

One of the best and most effectual ways to make those who are under our Care and Authority good, is to be good our Selves, and by our good Example to shew them the way to be so. Without this our best Instructions will signify but very little, and the main force and efficacy of them will be lost. We undermine the best Instructions we can give, when they are not seconded and confirmed by our own Example and Practice. The want of this will weaken the Authority of all our good Counsel, and very little Reverence and Obedience will be paid to it. The Precepts and Admonitions of a very good Man have in them a great power of Persuasion, and are apt strongly to move and to inflame others to *go and do likewise*: But the good Instructions of a bad Man are languid and faint, and of very little force; because they give no heart and encouragement to follow that Counsel, which they see he that gives it does not think fit to take himself. But of this likewise I shall have Occasion to speak more fully in the following



SERM. ing *Discourses* concerning the good *Education* of *Children*. And thus much may suffice to have spoken of the *First* thing which I proposed, namely, wherein the Practice of this *Duty* doth consist. I proceed to the *Second*, namely.

II. To consider our *Obligation* to it, both in point of *Duty* and of *Interest*.

*First*, In point of *Duty*. All Authority over others is a *Talent* intrusted with us by God for the benefit and good of others; and for which we are accountable, if we do not improve it and make use of it to that end. We are obliged by all lawful means to provide for the *temporal* welfare of our Family, to feed and cloath their *Bodies* and to give them a comfortable Subsistence here in the World: And surely much more are we obliged to take care of their *Souls*, and to consult their *eternal* Happiness in another Life; in comparison of which all *temporal* Concernments and Considerations are as nothing.

It would be accounted a very barbarous thing in a *Father* or *Master* to suffer a *Child* to starve for want of the *necessaries* of Life, *food* and *raiment*, and all the World would cry shame upon them for it: But how much greater Cruelty must it in reason be thought to let an *immortal* Soul, and one for whom *Christ* died, perish for want of *knowledge* and *necessary Instruction* for the attaining of *eternal Salvation*.

The *Apostle* St. *Paul* thinks no words bad enough for those who neglect the *temporal* welfare of their Families, *He that provideth not*, saith he, *for his own*, especially for those of his own House, hath denied the Faith, and is worse than an *Infidel*, that is, he does not deserve the name of a *Christian*, who neglects a Duty to which from the plain Dictates of *Nature* and *Heaven* thinks himself obliged. What then shall be said for them who take no care to provide for the everlasting Happiness, and to prevent the eternal Misery and Ruin of those who are so immediately

ly under their Charge, and so very nearly related to SERM.  
them ? L.

We are obliged to procure the Happiness of our *Children*, not only by the *Laws* of *Christianity*, but likewise by all the *Natural* bonds of *Duty* and *Affection*. For our *Children* are a part of our Selves, and if they perish by our fault and neglect, it will be a perpetual Wound and Sting to us ; their Blood will be upon our heads, and the Guilt of it will for ever lye at our doors.

Nay, we are obliged likewise in Justice, and by way of Reparation, to take all possible care of their Happiness ; for we have conveyed a sad Inheritance to them, in those corrupt and evil Inclinations which they have derived from us : And therefore we should with the greatest care and diligence endeavour to rectify their perverse Natures, and to cure those cursed dispositions to evil which we have transmitted to them : And since God hath been pleased in so much mercy to provide, by the abundant *Grace* of the *Gospel*, so powerful a *Remedy* for this *hereditary Disease* of our corrupt and degenerate Nature, we should do what in us lies, that they may partake of the Blessing and Benefit of it.

And as to other Members of our Family, whether they be *Servants*, or other *Relations*, of whom we have taken the Charge ; common *Humanity* will oblige us to be concerned for their Happiness as they are *Men* and of the same nature with our Selves ; and *Charity* likewise, as they are *Christians* and *Baptized* into the same *Faith* and capable of the same *common Salvation*, does yet more strictly oblige us by all means to endeavour that they may be made partakers of it ; especially since they are committed to our Care, and for that reason we must expect to be accountable to God for them.

So that our *Obligation* in point of *Duty* is very clear and strong, and if we be remiss and negligent

SERM. in the discharge of it, we can never answer it either  
 L. to God, or to our own Consciences : Which I hope  
 will awaken us all who are concerned in it to the serious consideration of it, and effectually engage us for the future to the faithful and conscientious performance of it.

Secondly, We are hereto likewise *obliged* in point of *Interest* ; because it is really for our service and advantage that those that belong to us should serve and fear God : Religion being the best and surest Foundation of the *Duties* of all *Relations*, and the best Caution and Security for the true discharge and performance of them.

Would we have dutiful and obedient *Children*, diligent and faithful *Servants* ? Nothing will so effectually oblige them to be so, as the Fear of God and the Principles of Religion firmly settled and rooted in them. *Abraham* who by the Testimony of God himself was so eminent an Example in this kind, both of a good *Father* and a good *Master* of his Family, found the good success of his Religious care in the happy effects of it, both upon his *Son Isaac*, and his chief *Servant* and *Steward* of his House, *Eliezer of Damascus*.

What an unexampled Instance of the most profound respect and obedience to the Commands of his Father did *Isaac* give, when without the least murmuring or reluctance he submitted to be bound, and laid upon the Altar, and to have been slain for a Sacrifice ; if God had not by an Angel, sent on purpose, interposed to prevent it ?

What an admirable *Servant* to *Abraham* was the *Steward* of his House, *Eliezer of Damascus* ? How diligent and faithful was he in his *Master's* service ? So that he trusted him in his greatest Concernments and with all that he had. And when he employed him in that great Affair of the Marriage of his *Son Isaac*, what pains did he take, what prudence did he use, what fidelity did he shew in the discharge of that



that great Trust, giving himself no rest till he had SERM.  
 accomplish'd the Business he was sent about? God L.  
 seems purposely to have left these two *Instances* upon  
 Record in *Scripture*, to encourage *Fathers* and *Mas-*  
*ters* of Families to a Religious care of their *Children*  
 and *Servants*.

And to shew the power of Religion to oblige men to their Duty, I will add but one Instance more. How did the Fear of God secure *Joseph's* fidelity to his *Master*, in the Case of a very great and violent Temptation? When there was nothing else to restrain him from so lewd and wicked an act, and to which he was so powerfully tempted, the consideration of the great trust his Master reposed in him, and the sense of his Duty to him, but above all, the *Fear of God* preserved him from consenting to so vile and wicked an action, *How can I*, says he, *do this great wickedness and sin against God?*

So that in prudence, and from a wise consideration of the great benefit and advantage which will thereby redound to us, we ought with the greatest care to instill the Principles of Religion into those that belong to us. For if the Seeds of true Piety be sown in them, we shall reap the fruits of it: And if this be neglected, we shall certainly find the mischief and inconvenience of it. If our *Children* and *Servants* be not taught to fear and reverence God, how can we expect that they should reverence and regard us? at least we can have no sure hold of them. For nothing but Religion lays an obligation upon Conscience, nor is there any other certain bond of Duty and Obedience and Fidelity: Men will break loose from all other Ties when a fit Occasion and a fair Opportunity doth strongly tempt them. And as Religion is necessary to procure the favour of God and all the comfort and happiness which that brings along with it, so it is necessary likewise to secure the mutual Duties and Offices of men to one another.

SERM. I proceed to the *Third* thing which I proposed  
L. namely.

III. To enquire into the *Causes* of the so common and shameful *Neglect* of this *Duty*, to the exceeding great decay of *Piety* among us. And this may in part be ascribed to our *Civil Confusions* and *Distractions*, but chiefly to our *Dissentions* and *Differences* in Religion, which have not only divided and scattered our *Parochial Churches* and *Congregations*, but have entered likewise into our *Families*, and make great disturbances and disorders there.

*First*, This may in good part be ascribed to our *Civil Confusions* and *Distractions*, which for the time do lay all *Laws* asleep, and do not only occasion a general *Licentiousness* and *Dissoluteness* of *Manners*, but have usually a proportionable bad influence upon the *Order* and *Government* of *Families*; by weakning the *Authority* of those that Govern, and by giving the opportunity of greater *License* to those that should be *governed*: For when *publick Laws* lose their *Authority*, it is hard to maintain and keep up the strict *Rules* and *Orders* of *Families*, which after great and long Disorder are very hard to be retrieved and recover'd.

*Secondly*, This great Neglect and Decay of Religious Order in Families is chiefly owing to our *Dissentions* and *Differences* in Religion, upon occasion whereof many under the pretence of *Conscience* have broke loose into a boundless *Liberty*. So that among the manifold ill Consequences of our *Divisions* in Religion this is none of the least, that the Religious Order of Families hath been in a great measure broken and dissolved. Some will not meet at the same *Prayer* in the *Family*, nor go to the same *Church* and Place of *publick Worship*; and upon that pretence take the liberty to do what they please, and under colour of serving God in a different way according to their *Consciences*, do either wholly or in great measure

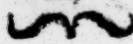
neglect the Worship of God ; nay, it is well SERM.  
if they do not at that *Time* haunt and frequent L.  
Places of Debauchery and Lewdness ; which they  
may safely do, being from under the eye of their *Pa-*  
*rents* and *Masters* : However by this means it be-  
comes impossible for the most careful *Masters* of *Fa-*  
*families*, to take an account of those under their Charge  
how they spend their time on the *Lord's Day*, and to  
train them up in any certain and orderly way of Re-  
ligion.

And this methinks is so great and sensible an in-  
convenience, and hath had such dismal effects in ma-  
ny Families, as ought effectually to convince us of the  
necessity of endeavouring a greater Union in mat-  
ters of Religion ; and to put us in mind of those  
happy Days when God was served in one way, and  
whole Families *went to the House of God in Compa-*  
*nies* ; and *Fathers* and *Masters* had their *Children* and  
*Servants* continually under their eye, and they were  
all united in their Worship and Devotion, both in  
their own Houses and in the House of God ; and by  
this means the Work of religious Education and In-  
struction was effectually carried on, and a steady Au-  
thority and decent Order was maintained in Fami-  
lies ; men were edified and built up in Religion, and  
*God in all things was glorified.*

And we may assure our selves, that till we are  
better agreed in matters of Religion, and our un-  
happy and childish Differences are laid aside ; and  
till the publick and unanimous Worship of God do  
in some measure recover its reputation, the good Or-  
der and Government of Families as to the great  
ends of Religion is never likely to obtain and have  
any considerable effect. Which I hope will make  
all men who heartily love God and Religion, to con-  
sider seriously how necessary it is to put an end to  
these Differences ; that in our private Families, as well  
as in the publick Assemblies of the Church, we may



SERM. *with one mind and with one mouth glorify God, even the*  
 L. *Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*

 I beseech you therefore Brethren, as St. Paul exhorts the Corinthians, 1 Cor. 1. 10. by the Name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you, but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind, and in the same judgment, that is, so far as is necessary to the keeping of the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace, and to prevent Divisions and Separations among Christians. I proceed to the fourth and last thing I proposed, and which remains to be very briefly spoken to, namely,

IV. The very mischievous and fatal *Consequences* of the neglect of this *Duty* both to the *Publick*, and to *our selves*.

*First, To the Publick.* Families are the first *Seminaries* of Religion, and if care be not there taken to prepare persons, especially in their tender years, for publick teaching and instruction, it is like to have but very little effect. The neglect of a due preparation of our Children and Servents at *home*, to make them capable of profiting by what they hear and may learn at *Church*, is like an error in first Concoction which can hardly ever be corrected afterwards. So that in this first neglect the foundation of an infinite Mischief is laid; because if no care be taken of persons in their younger years, when they are most capable of the impressions of Religion, how can it reasonably be expected that they should come to good afterwards? And if they continue void of the Fear of God, which there hath been no care taken to plant in them, they will almost necessarily be bad in all Relations; undutiful Children, slothful and unfaithful Servants, scandalous Members of the Church, unprofitable to the commonwealth, disobedient to Governors both ecclesiastical and civil; and in a word, Burthens of the Earth, and so many Plagues

of human Society : And this Evil, if no Remedy SERM.  
 be applied to it, will continually grow worse, and L.  
 diffuse and spread it self farther in every Age, till W  
 Impiety and Wickedness, Infidelity and Profaneness  
 have over-run all, and the World be ripe for its final  
 Ruin : Just as it was before the Destruction of the  
 old World, when *the wickedness of Man was great*  
*upon the Earth, and all Flesh had corrupted their way,*  
*then the Flood came and swept them all away.*

Secondly, The Consequences of this Neglect will like-  
 wise be very dismal to *our selves*. We shall first of  
 all others feel the *Inconvenience*, as we had the great-  
 est share in the *Guilt* of it. We can have no man-  
 ner of security of the Duty and Fidelity of those of  
 our Family to us, if we have no sense of Religion,  
 no fear of God before their eyes. If we have taken  
 no care to instruct them in their Duty to God, it is  
 no wise probable that they will make Conscience of  
 their Duty to us.

So that we shall have the first ill Consequences of  
 their Miscarriage ; besides the *Shame* and *Sorrow* of  
 it : And not only so, but all the evil they commit ever  
 after, will be in a great measure chargeable upon us,  
 and will be put upon our score in the Judgment of  
 the great Day. It ought to make us tremble to think  
 with what bitterness and rage our Children and Ser-  
 vants will then fly in our faces, for having been the  
 Cause of their eternal Ruin, for want of due care on  
 our part to prevent it. In *that Day*, next to God  
 and our *own Consciences*, our most terrible *Accusers*  
 will be those of our own *House*, nay those that come  
 out of our own *Bowels*, and were not only part of our  
 own *Family*, but even of our *selves*. But this also I  
 shall have a proper Occasion to prosecute more fully  
 in the following *Discourses* concerning the *Education*  
*of Children*, to which I refer it.

Upon all these Considerations and many more that  
 might be urg'd upon us, we should take up the pious  
 Resolution of *Joskua* here in the Text, that *We and*

SERM. *our Houses will serve the Lord:* And that, thro'  
 L. God's Grace, we will do all that in us lies by our fu-  
 W ture Care and Diligence to repair our former neglects  
 in this kind.

I shall only add this one *Consideration* more to all that I have already mentioned: If *Children* were carefully educated, and *Families* regularly and religiously ordered, what a happy and delightful Place, what a Paradise would this World be, in comparison of what now it is?

I beseech you therefore, *Brethren*, that these things which I have with so much plainness and faithfulness laid before you, may sink into your hearts, before it be too late, and whilst the thing may be remedied; that you may not for ever lament this neglect and repent of it, when the thing will be past remedy and there will be no place for Repentance. *But I hope better things of you, Brethren, and things that accompany Salvation, though I thus speak.*

## S E R M O N    L I.

### Of the Education of Children.

Proverbs xxii. 6.

*Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*

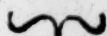
SERM. **I** Have on purpose chosen this *Text* for the subject  
 LI. of a preparatory Discourse in order to the re-  
 W ving of that so shamefully neglected and yet  
 most useful and necessary Duty of *Catechizing*  
 children and young persons: But I shall extend it to the  
 confide-



consideration of the *Education* of *Children* in general, as a matter of the greatest consequence both to Religion and the publick welfare.

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For we who are the Ministers of God ought not only to instruct those who are committed to our charge in the common Duties of Christianity, such as belong to all Christians, but likewise in all the particular Duties which the several Relations in which they stand to one another do respectively require and call for from them.

And amongst all these I know none that is of greater concernment to Religion and to the good Order of the World than the careful Education of Children. And there is hardly any thing that is more difficult, and which requires a more prudent and diligent and constant application of our best care and endeavour.

It is a known Saying of *Melancthon*, that there are three things which are extremely difficult, *parturire, docere, regere*; to bear and bring forth Children, to instruct and bring them up to be Men, and to govern them when they arrive at Men's estate. The Instruction and good Education of Children is none of the least difficult of these. For to do it to the best advantage does not only require great sagacity to discern their particular disposition and temper, but great discretion to deal with them and manage them, and likewise continual care and diligent attendance to form them by degrees to Religion and Virtue.

It requires great wisdom and industry to advance a considerable Estate, much art and contrivance and pains to raise a great and regular Building: But the greatest and noblest Work in the World, and an effect of the greatest prudence and care is to rear and build up a Man, and to form and fashion him to Piety and Justice, and Temperance, and all kind of honest and worthy actions. Now the Foundations of this great Work are to be carefully laid in the tender Years of Children, that it may rise and grow

SERM. grow up with them ; according to the advice of the  
 LI. Wiseman herein the Text, *Train up a Child in the way*  
 W he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.

In which words are contained these two things.

*First*, The Duty of Parents and Instructors of Children, *Train up a Child*, &c. By *Childhood* here I understand the Age of Persons from their Birth, but more especially from their first capacity of Instruction till they arrive at the State and Age which next succeeds *Childhood*, and which we call *Youth* ; and which is the proper Season for *Confirmation*. For when Children have been well *catechised* and instructed in Religion, then is the fittest Time for them to take upon themselves and in their own Persons to confirm that *solemn Vow* which by their *Sureties* they made at their *Baptism*.

*Train up a child in the way he should go*, that is, in the course of Life that he ought to lead ; instruct him carefully in the knowledge and practice of his whole duty to God and Men, which he ought to observe and perform all the days of his Life.

*Secondly*, Here is the consequent fruit and benefit of good Education : *And when he is old he will not depart from it*. This we are to understand according to the moral probability of things : Not as if this happy effect did always and infallibly follow upon the good Education of a Child, but that this very frequently is, and may probably be presumed and hoped to be the fruit and effect of a pious and prudent Education. *Solomon* means that from the very nature of the thing this is the most hopeful and likely way to train up a Child to be a good Man. For as *Aristotle* truly observes, *moral Sayings* and *proverbial Speeches* are to be understood only ἐπὶ το πλὸν, that is, to be usually and for the most part true. And tho' there may be several *exceptions* made, and *instances* given to the contrary, yet this doth not infringe the general truth of them : But if in frequent and common experience they be found true, this is all the truth that

that is expected in them, because it is all that was SERM.  
intended by them. LI.

And of this nature is this *Aphorism* or *Proverb* of Solomon in the *Text*; and so likewise are most of the *wise Sayings* of this *Book* of the *Proverbs*, as also of *Ecclesiastes*: And we do greatly mistake the design and meaning of them whenever we go about to exact them to a more strict and rigorous truth, and shall upon due consideration find it impossible to bring them to it.

So that the true meaning of the *Text* may be fully comprized in the following *Proposition*.

*That the careful, and prudent, and religious Education of Children bath for the most part a very good influence upon the whole course of their lives.*

In the handling of this Argument I design, by God's assistance, to reduce my Discourse to these *five* Heads.

I. I shall shew more generally wherein the good Education of Children doth consist, and severally consider the principal parts of it.

II. I shall give some more particular Directions for the management of this work in such a way as may be most effectual for its end.

III. I shall take notice of some of the common and more remarkable miscarriages in the performance of this Duty.

IV. I shall endeavour to make out the truth of this *Proposition*, by shewing how the good Education of Children comes to be of so great advantage and to have so powerful and lasting an influence upon their whole Lives.

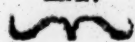
V. and *lastly*; I shall by the most powerful Arguments I can offer, endeavour to stir up and persuade those whose Duty this is, to discharge it with great care and conscience.

I. I shall shew more generally *wherein the good Education of Children doth consist*, and severally consider the *principal Parts* of it. And under this *Head* I shall



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shall comprehend promiscuously the Duty of *Parents*, and, in case of their Death, of *Guardians*; and of *Godfathers* and *Godmothers*; tho' this for the most part signifies very little more than a pious and charitable care and concernment for them, because the Children for whom they are *Sureties* are seldom under their power: And the Duty likewise of those who are the *Teachers* and *Instructors* of them: And the Duty also of *Masters of Families* towards *Servants* in their childhood and younger years: And lastly the Duty of *Ministers*, under whose *parochial* care and inspection Children are as members of the Families committed to their charge: I say, under this *Head* I shall comprehend the Duties of these respectively, according to the several obligations which lie upon each of them in their several relations to them. And I shall reduce them to these *eight* particulars, as the principal parts wherein the Education of Children doth consist.

*First*, In the tender and careful nursing of them.

*Secondly*, In bringing them to be baptized and admitted Members of *Christ's Church*, at the times appointed or accustomed in the national Church of which the Parents are Members.

*Thirdly*, In a due care to inform and instruct them in the whole compass of their Duty to *God* and to their *Neighbour*.

*Fourthly*, And more especially in a prudent and diligent care to form their Lives and Manners to Religion and Virtue.

*Fifthly*, In giving them good Example.

*Sixthly*, In wise restraints from that which is evil, by seasonable Reproof and Correction.

*Seventhly*, In bringing them to be publicly catechised by the Minister in order to Confirmation.

*Eighthly*, In bringing them to the Bishop to be solemnly confirmed, by their taking upon themselves the Vow which by their *Sureties* they entred into at their Baptism.

I. In the tender and careful nursing of Children. I SERM. LI.

mention this first, because it is the first and most natural Duty incumbent upon Parents towards their Children: And this is particularly the Duty of Mothers. This affection and tenderness, Nature which is our surest guide and director, hath implanted in all living Creatures towards their young ones: And there cannot be a greater reproach to Creatures that are endued with Reason, than to neglect a Duty to which Nature directs even the Brute Creatures by a blind and unthinking Instinct. So that it is such a Duty as cannot be neglected without a down-right affront to Nature, and from which nothing can excuse but *disability*, or *sickness*, or the *evident danger* of the *Mother*, or the *interposition* of the *Father's Authority*, or some very *extraordinary* and *publick necessity*.

This I foresee will seem a very *hard saying* to nice and delicate Mothers, who prefer their own ease and pleasure to the fruit of their own Bodies: But whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, I think myself obliged to deal plain in this matter, and to be so faithful as to tell them that this is a natural Duty; and because it is so, of a more necessary and indispensable obligation than any *positive* Precept of *reveal'd Religion*; and that the general neglect of it is one of the great and crying Sins of this Age and Nation; and which as much as any Sin whatsoever is evidently a punishment to it self in the palpable ill effects and consequences of it: which I shall, as briefly as I can endeavour to represent; that if it be possible, we may in this first point of Education, so fundamental and necessary to the happiness both of Parents and Children, and consequently to the Publick Good of Human Society, be brought to comply with the unerring Instinct of Nature, and with the plain Dictate of the common Reason of Mankind, and the general practice of all Ages and Nations.

First,

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*First*, The neglect of this Duty is a sort of exposing of Children; especially when it is not done, as very often it is not, with more than ordinary care and choice. It always exposeth them to manifest inconvenience, and sometimes to great danger; even to that degree as in the consequence of it is but little better than the laying a Child in the Streets, and leaving it to the care and compassion of a Parish. There are *two* very visible inconveniences which do commonly attend it.

*1st*, Strange Milk, which is often very disagreeable to the Child, and with which the Child to be sure sucks in the natural infirmities of the Nurse, together with a great deal of her natural inclinations and irregular passions, which many times stick by the Child for a long time after: And which is worse than all this, it sometimes happens that some secret Disease of the Nurse is conveyed to the Child.

*2dly*, A shameful and dangerous neglect of the Child, especially by such Nurses as make a Trade of it; of whom there are great numbers in and about this great City: Who after they have made their first and main advantage of the Child, by the excessive, not to say, extravagant *vails*, which usually here in *England*, above all places in the world, are given at *Childrenings*: And then by the strait allowances which are commonly made afterwards for the nursing and keeping of the Child, are often tempted, not to say worse, to a great neglect of the Child; which, if it happen to dye for want of due care, sets the Nurse at liberty to make a new advantage by taking another Child.

Nor can it well be otherwise expected than that a Nurse, who by this course is first made to be unnatural to her own Child, should have no great care and tenderness for a Child which is not her own.

I have heard a very sad Observation made by those who have had the opportunity to know it, that in several of the *Towns* and *Villages* about *London*, where



this Trade of nursing Children is chiefly driven, SERM.  
hardly one in five of these Children lives out the year: LI.  
And this surely is a danger which natural affection  
as well as duty does oblige Parents to take all possible  
care to prevent.

Secondly, This course doth most certainly tend very much to the estranging and weakning of natural affection on both sides; I mean both on the part of the Mother and of the Child. The pains of nursing as well as of bearing Children doth insensibly create a strange tenderness of affection and care in the Mother. *Can a woman, says God, forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb?* Isa. 49. 15. *Can a Woman?* that is, a Mother, not a Nurse; for the *sucking child* is said to be *the son of her womb*, God speaks of this as a thing next to impossible.

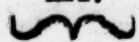
And this likewise is a great endearment of the Mother to the Child: Which endearment, when the Child is put out, is transferred from the Mother to the Nurse, and many times continues to be so for a great many years after; yea, and often to that degree as if the Nurse were the true Mother, and the true Mother a meer stranger. So that by this means natural affection must be extreamly weaken'd; which is great pity, because when it is kept up in its full strength it often proves one of the best securities of the Duty of a Child.

But because this severe Doctrine will go down but very hardly with a great many, I must take the more care to guard it against the *Objections* which will be made to it. Those from *natural dissability*, or *sickness*; from *evident* and *apparent danger* of the *Mother*, or from the *interposition* of the *Father's Authority*, or from *plain necessity*; or if there be any other that have an equal Reason with these, I have prevented already by allowing them to be just and reasonable *exceptions* from the general *Rule*, when they are real, and not made *Pretences* to shake off our *Duty*.

But

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But there are besides these, *two* Objections which indeed are real, but yet seem to have too great a weight with those who would fain decline this Duty, and are by no means sufficient to excuse Mothers, no not those of the highest Rank and Quality, from the natural obligation of it. And they are these. The *manifest trouble*, and the *manifest restraints* which the careful discharge of this Duty does unavoidably bring upon those who submit themselves to it.

1<sup>st</sup>. For the *trouble* of it, I have only this to say, and I think that no more need to be said about it; that no body is discharged from any Duty by reason of the trouble which necessarily attends it, and is inseparable from it; since God who made it a Duty foresaw the trouble of it when he made it so.

2<sup>dly</sup>. As to the *manifest restraints* which it lays upon Mothers; and this will best be answered by considering of what nature these *restraints* are. And they are chiefly in these and the like instances. This Duty restrains Mothers from spending their Morning and their Money in curious and costly Dressing; from mispending the rest of the Day in formal and for the most part impertinent Visits, and in seeing and hearing Plays, many of which are neither fit to be seen or heard by modest Persons and those who pretend to Religion and Virtue; as I hope all Christians do, especially Persons of higher Rank and Quality: and it restrains them likewise from trifling away a great part of the Night in Gaming, and in Revelling till past Midnight, I am loth to say how much.

These are those terrible *restraints* which this natural Duty, of Mothers nursing their Children, lays upon them. Now I cannot but think all these to be very happy *restraints*: Happy surely for the *Child*, and in many respects happy for the *Father*, and for the whole *Family*, which by this means will be kept in much better order: But happiest of all for the Mother,

ther, who does herein not only discharge a great and necessary Duty, but is hereby also hindred from running into many great Faults, which before they will be forgiven must cost her a deep Contrition, and a very bitter Repentance. SERM. LI.

Perhaps I may have gone further in this unusual Argument, than will please the present Age : But I hope Posterity will be so wise as to consider it and lay it to heart. For I am greatly afraid that the World will never be much better till this great Fault be mended. I proceed to the next *Particular* wherein the good Education of Children doth consist, namely,

II. *In bringing them to be Baptized and admitted Members of Christ's Church*, at the times appointed or accustomed in the National Church of which the Parents are Members. I mean, to bring them to the Church to be there publicly *initiated*, and solemnly admitted by *Baptism*. And this the Rules of the Church of *England* do strictly enjoin, unless the Child be in danger of death ; and in that Case only it is allow'd to administer Baptism privately, and in a summary way without performing the whole *Office* : But then if the Child live, it is ordered that it shall be brought to the Church, where the remainder of the *Office* is to be solemnly perform'd.

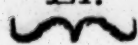
I know that of late years, since our unhappy *Confusions*, this *Sacrament* hath very frequently been administered in private : And *Ministers* have been in a manner, and to avoid the great mischief of *Separation*, necessitated to comply with the obstinacy of the greater and more powerful of their *Parishioners*, who for their ease, or humour, or for the convenience of a pompous *Chriftening*, will either have their Children baptized at home by their *Minister* ; or if he refuse, will get some other *Minister* to do it ; which is very irregular.

Now I would intreat such Persons calmly to consider how contrary to Reason and to the plain design



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But there are besides these, *two* Objections which indeed are real, but yet seem to have too great a weight with those who would fain decline this Duty, and are by no means sufficient to excuse Mothers, no not those of the highest Rank and Quality, from the natural obligation of it. And they are these. The *manifest trouble*, and the *manifest restraints* which the careful discharge of this Duty does unavoidably bring upon those who submit themselves to it.

1<sup>st</sup>. For the *trouble* of it, I have only this to say, and I think that no more need to be said about it; that no body is discharged from any Duty by reason of the trouble which necessarily attends it, and is inseparable from it; since God who made it a Duty foresaw the trouble of it when he made it so.

2<sup>dly</sup>. As to the *manifest restraints* which it lays upon Mothers; and this will best be answered by considering of what nature these *restraints* are. And they are chiefly in these and the like instances. This Duty restrains Mothers from spending their Morning and their Money in curious and costly Dressing; from mispending the rest of the Day in formal and for the most part impertinent Visits, and in seeing and hearing Plays, many of which are neither fit to be seen or heard by modest Persons and those who pretend to Religion and Virtue; as I hope all Christians do, especially Persons of higher Rank and Quality: and it restrains them likewise from trifling away a great part of the Night in Gaming, and in Revelling till past Midnight, I am loth to say how much.

These are those terrible *restraints* which this natural Duty, of Mothers nursing their Children, lays upon them. Now I cannot but think all these to be very happy *restraints*: Happy surely for the *Child*, and in many respects happy for the *Father*, and for the whole *Family*, which by this means will be kept in much better order: But happiest of all for the Mother,

ther, who does herein not only discharge a great and **SERM.**  
 necessary Duty, but is hereby also hindred from run- **LI.**  
 ning into many great Faults, which before they will  
 be forgiven must cost her a deep Contrition, and a  
 very bitter Repentance.

Perhaps I may have gone further in this unusual  
 Argument, than will please the present Age : But I  
 hope Posterity will be so wise as to consider it and  
 lay it to heart. For I am greatly afraid that the  
 World will never be much better till this great Fault  
 be mended. I proceed to the next *Particular* where-  
 in the good Education of Children doth consist,  
 namely,

II. *In bringing them to be Baptized and admitted  
 Members of Christ's Church*, at the times appointed  
 or accustomed in the National Church of which the  
 Parents are Members. I mean, to bring them to  
 the Church to be there publicly *initiated*, and solemn-  
 ly admitted by *Baptism*. And this the Rules of the  
 Church of *England* do strictly enjoin, unless the  
 Child be in danger of death ; and in that Case only  
 it is allow'd to administer Baptism privately, and in  
 a summary way without performing the whole *Office* :  
 But then if the Child live, it is ordered that it shall  
 be brought to the Church, where the remainder of  
 the *Office* is to be solemnly perform'd.

I know that of late years, since our unhappy *Con-  
 fusions*, this *Sacrament* hath very frequently been ad-  
 ministered in private : And *Ministers* have been in a  
 manner, and to avoid the great mischief of *Separation*,  
 necessitated to comply with the obstinacy of the  
 greater and more powerful of their *Parishioners* ;  
 who for their ease, or humour, or for the conveni-  
 ence of a pompous *Chriftening*, will either have their  
 Children baptized at home by their *Minister* ; or if  
 he refuse, will get some other *Minister* to do it ; which  
 is very irregular.

Now I would intreat such Persons calmly to con-  
 sider how contrary to Reason and to the plain design  
 of

SERM. of the institution of this *Sacrament*, this perverse  
 LI. custom, and their obstinate resolution in it, is.  
 (W) For is there any *civil Society* or *Corporation* into which persons are admitted without some kind of *Solemnity*? And is the *Privilege* of being admitted *Members* of the *Christian Church*, and *Heirs* of the great and glorious *Promises* and *Blessings* of the *new Covenant* of the *Gospel* less considerable and fit to be conferr'd with less *Solemnity*? I speak to *Christians*, and they who are so in good earnest, will without my using more words about it, consider what I say in this particular.

III. Another and very necessary Part of the good Education of Children is, *by degrees to inform, and carefully to instruct them in the whole compass of their Duty to God, their Neighbour and themselves*: That so they may be taught how to behave themselves in all the steps of their Life, from their first capacity of Reason till they arrive at the more perfect use and exercise of that Faculty; when, if at first they be well instructed, they will be better able to direct and govern themselves afterwards.

This Duty God does expressly and very particularly charge upon his own peculiar People, the People of *Israel*, speaking of the *Law* which he had given them: *Deut. 6. 7. Thou shalt, says he, teach them diligently unto thy Children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way; when thou liest down, and when thou risest up.* And this God long before promised that *Abraham the Father of the Faithful*, would do. *Gen. 18. 19. I know Abraham, says he, that he will command his Children and his Household after him to keep the way of the Lord.*

This Work ought to be begun very early, upon the first budding and appearance of Reason and Understanding in Children. So the *Prophet* directs; *Isa. 28. 9, 10. Whom shall he teach knowledge? Whom shall he make to understand doctrine? Them that*



that are weaned from the milk, and drawn from the breast: For precept must be upon precept, &c.

SERM  
LI.

To this end we must, by such degrees as they are capable, bring them acquainted with God and themselves. And in the first place we must inform them, that there is such a *Being* as *God*, whom we ought to honour and reverence above all things. And then, that we are all his *Creatures*, and the work of his hands, that *it is He that hath made us and not we our selves*: That He continually preserves us, and gives us all the good things that we enjoy; and therefore we ought to ask every thing of Him by Prayer, because this is an acknowledgment of our dependance upon Him; and to return *thanks* to Him for all that we have and hope for, because this is a just and easy *Tribute*, and all that we can render to Him for his numberless favours and benefits.

And after this they are to be instructed more particularly in their *Duty to God and Men*, as I shall shew more fully afterwards. And because *Fear* and *Hope* are the two *Passions* which do chiefly sway and govern human Nature, and the main Springs and Principles of Action; therefore Children are to be carefully inform'd that there is a Life after Death, wherein men shall receive from God a mighty and eternal Reward or a terrible and endless Punishment, according as they have done or neglected their Duty in this Life: That God will love and reward those who do his will and keep his commandments, but will execute a dreadful punishment upon the workers of iniquity and the wilful transgressors of his Laws.

And according as they are capable, they are to be made sensible of the great degeneracy and corruption of human Nature, derived to us by the *Fall* and wilful transgression of our *first Parents*; and of the way of our *Recovery* out of this miserable state by *Jesus Christ*; whom God hath sent

SERM. in our Nature to purchase and accomplish the Redemption and Salvation of Mankind, from the Captivity of Sin and Satan, and from the Damnation of Hell.

LI.

IV. The good Education of Children consists not only in informing their Minds in the knowledge of God and their Duty, but more especially in endeavouring with the greatest care and prudence to form their Lives and Manners to Religion and Virtue. And this must be done by training them up to the exercise of the following Graces and Virtues.

First, To Obedience and Modesty; to Diligence and Sincerity; and to Tenderness and Pity, as the general dispositions to Religion and Virtue.

Secondly, To the good government of their Passions, and of their Tongue; and particularly to speak truth, and to hate Lying as a base and vile quality; these being as it were the foundations of Religion and Virtue.

Thirdly, To Piety and Devotion towards God; to Sobriety and Chastity with regard to themselves; and to Justice and Charity towards all men; as the principal and essential Parts of Religion and Virtue.

First, As the general dispositions to Religion and Virtue we must train them up

1st. To Obedience. Parents must take great care to maintain their Authority over their Children; otherwise they will neither regard their Commands, nor hearken to and follow their Instructions. If they once get head and grow stubborn and disobedient, there is very little hope left of doing any great good upon them.

2dly, To Modesty, which is a fear of Shame and Disgrace. This disposition, which is proper to Children, is a marvellous advantage to all good purposes; They are modest, says Aristotle, who are afraid to offend, and they are afraid to offend who are most apt to do it; as Children are, because they are much under the power of their passions, with-

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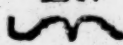
out a proportionable strength of *Reason* to govern SERM.  
 them and keep them under. LI.

Now *Modesty* is not properly a *Virtue*, but it is a very good Sign of a tractable and towardly *Disposition*, and a great preservative and security against *Sin* and *Vice*: And those Children, who are much under the restraint of *Modesty*, we look upon as most hopeful and likely to prove good: Whereas *Immodesty*, is a vicious temper broke loose and got free from all restraint: So that there is nothing left to keep an *impudent* person from *Sin*, when fear of *Shame* is gone: For *Sin* will soon take possession of that person whom *Shame* hath left. He that is once become shameless hath prostituted himself. Therefore preserve this *Disposition* in Children as much as is possible, as one of the best means to preserve their innocency, and to bring them to goodness.

3dly. To *Diligence*, *sine quâ vir magnus nunquam exiit, without which*, says one, *there never was any great and excellent person*. When the *Roman Historians* describe an extraordinary man, this always enters into his Character as an essential part of it, that he was *incredibili industriâ, diligentia singulari*, or *incredible industry, of singular diligence*; or something to that purpose. And indeed a person can neither be excellently good, nor extremely bad without this quality. The *Devil* himself could not be so bad and mischievous as he is, if he were not so stirring and restless a Spirit, and did not compass the *Earth*, and go to and fro seeking whom he may devour.

This is a part of the Character of *Sylla*, and *Marius*, and *Cataline*, those great Disturbers of the *Roman State*; as well as of *Cæsar* and *Pompey*, who were much greater and better men, but yet gave trouble enough to their Country, and at last dissolv'd the *Roman Commonwealth*, by their Ambition and Contention for Superiority: This, I say, enters into all their Characters, that they were of a



SERM. vigorous and indefatigable Spirit. So that *Diligence* in it self is neither a *Virtue* nor a *Vice*, but  
 LI.  may be applied either way, to good or bad purposes; and yet where all other requisites do concur it is a very proper *Instrument* and *Disposition* for *Virtue*.

Therefore train up Children to *Diligence*, if ever you desire they should excel in any kind. *The diligent hand, saith Solomon maketh rich*, Prov. 10. 4. *Rich* in estate, *rich* in knowledge. See'st thou a man diligent in his business, as the same *Wise-man* observes, Prov. 22. 29. *he shall stand before Princes, he shall not stand before mean, or obscure men.* And again, Prov. 12. 24. *The hand of the diligent shall bear rule, but the slothful shall be under Tribute.* *Diligence* puts almost every thing into our power, and will in time make Children capable of the best and greatest things.

Whereas *Idleness* is the bane and ruin of Children; it is the unbending of their Spirits, the *Rust* of their Faculties, and as it were the laying of their Minds *fallow*; not as Husbandmen do their Lands that they may get new heart and strength, but to impair and lose that which they have. Children that are bred up in laziness are almost necessarily bad, because they cannot take the pains to be good; and they cannot take pains, because they have never been inured and accustomed to it; which makes their Spirits *restive*, and when you have occasion to quicken them and spur them up to business, they will stand stock still.

Therefore never let your Children be without a *Calling*, or without some useful, or at least innocent employment that will take them up; that they may not be put upon a kind of necessity of being *vicious* for want of something better to do. The *Devil* tempts the active and vigorous into his service, knowing what fit and proper instruments they are to do his drudgery: But the  
 slothful

lothful and idle, no body having hired them SERM.  
and set them on work, lie in his way, and he LI.  
stumbles upon them as *he goes about*; and they do  
as it were offer themselves to his service, and ha-  
ving nothing to do they even tempt the *Devil* him-  
self to tempt *them*, and to take them in his way.

4thly. To *sincerity*; which is not so properly a  
single Virtue, as the life and soul of all other  
Graces and Virtues; and without which,  
what shew of Goodness soever a man may make,  
he is unsound and rotten at the heart. Cherish  
therefore this disposition in Children, as that which  
when they come to be men will be the great se-  
curity and ornament of their lives, and will ren-  
der them acceptable both to God and Men.

5thly, To *tenderness* and *pity*: Which, when  
they come to engage in business and to have deal-  
ings in the World, will be a good bar against In-  
justice and Oppression; and will be continually  
prompting us to Charity, and will fetch powerful  
Arguments for it from our own bowels.

To preserve this goodness and tenderness of nature,  
this so very human and useful affection, keep Chil-  
dren, as much as is possible, out of the way of  
*bloody Sights* and *Spectacles* of cruelty; and discoun-  
tenance in them all cruel and barbarous usage of  
Creatures under their power; do not allow them  
to torture and to kill them for their sport and plea-  
sure because this will insensibly and by degrees  
harden their hearts, and make them less apt to  
compassionate the wants of the poor and the suf-  
ferings and afflictions of the miserable.

Secondly, As the main *Foundations* of Religion  
and Virtue, Children must be carefully train'd up  
to the Government of their *Passions*, and of their  
*Tongues*; and particularly to *speaking truth*, and to  
hate *lying* as a base and vile quality.

1st. To the good Government of their *Passions*.  
It is the disorder of these, more especially of *De-*

SERM. *fire, and Fear, and Anger, which betrays us to many evils. Anger prompts men to contention and murder:*

LI. *Inordinate Desire, to covetousness and fraud and oppression: And Fear many times awes men into Sin, and deters them from their Duty.*

Now if these *Passions* be cherish'd, or even but let alone in Children, they will in a short time grow headstrong and unruly, and when they come to be men will corrupt the judgment, and turn good nature into humour, and the understanding into prejudice and wilfulness: But if they be carefully observed and prudently restrained, they may by degrees be managed and brought under government; and the inordinacy of them being prun'd away they may prove excellent Instruments of Virtue.

Therefore be careful to discountenance in Children any thing that looks like Rage and furious Anger, and to shew them the unreasonableness and deformity of it. Check their longing Desires after things pleasant, and use them to frequent disappointments in that kind; that when you think fit to gratify them they may take it for a favour, and not challenge every thing they have a mind to as their due; and by degrees may learn to submit to the more prudent choice of their Parents, as being much better able to judge what is good and fit for them.

And when you see them at any time apt out of *Fear* to neglect their Duty, or to fall into any Sin, or to be tempted by telling a Lye to commit one fault to hide and excuse another, which Children are very apt to do: The best Remedy of this Evil will be to plant a greater Fear against a less, and to tell them *what* and *whom* they should chiefly fear; *not him who can hurt and kill the Body, but Him who after He hath kill'd can destroy both Body and Soul in Hell.*

The neglect of Children in this matter, I mean in not teaching them to govern their *Passions*, is the true cause why many that have proved sincere  
Christians



*Christians* when they came to be Men have yet been **SERM.**  
 very imperfect in their conversation, and their **Lives** **LI.**  
 have been full of inequalities and breaches, which  
 have not only been matter of great trouble and  
 disquiet to themselves, but of great scandal to Re-  
 ligion; when their light which should shine before  
 men is so often darken'd and obscured by these fre-  
 quent and visible infirmities.

2dly, To the government of their *Tongues*. To  
 this end teach Children *Silence*, especially in the  
 presence of their *Betters*: And as soon as they are  
 capable of such a Lesson, let them be taught not  
 to speak but upon *consideration*, both of *what*  
 they say, and before *whom*. And above all, incul-  
 cate upon them that most necessary Duty and  
 Virtue of *speaking truth*, as one of the best and  
 strongest bands of Human Society and Commerce:  
 And possess them with the baseness and vileness of  
 telling a Lye; for if it be so great a provocation  
 to give a man the Lye, then surely to be guilty of  
 that Fault must be a mighty Reproach.

They who write of *Japan* tell us that those  
 People, though mere *Heathens*, take such an ef-  
 fectual course in the Education of their Children,  
 as to render a Lye and breach of Faith, above all  
 things odious to them: Insomuch that it is a very  
 rare thing for any Person among them to be ta-  
 ken in a lye, or found guilty of breach of Faith.  
 And cannot the Rules of *Christianity* be render'd  
 as effectual to restrain men from these Faults which  
 are scandalous even to *Nature*, and much more so  
 to the *Christian Religion*?

To the government of the *Tongue* does likewise  
 belong the restraining of Children from *lewd* and  
*obscene* words, from *vain* and *profane* talk; and es-  
 pecially from horrid *Oaths* and *Imprecations*: From  
 all which they are easily kept at first, but if they  
 are once accustomed to them, it will be found no  
 such easy matter for them to get quit of these evil  
 Habits.

SERM. Habits. It will require great attention and watchfulness over themselves, to keep *Oaths* out of their common discourse; but if they be heated and in passion, they throw out *Oaths* and *Curses* as naturally as men that are highly provoked fling stones, or any thing that comes next to hand at one another: So dangerous a thing is it to let any thing that is bad in Children to grow up into a *Habit*.

Thirdly, As the *principal* and *essential* Parts of Religion and Virtue, let Children be carefully bred up,

1st, To *Sobriety* and *Temperance* in regard to themselves; under which I comprehend likewise *Purity* and *Chastity*. The government of the *sensual Appetite* as to all kind of *Bodily* pleasures is not only a great part of Religion, but an excellent instrument of it, and a necessary foundation of *Piety* and *Justice*. For he that cannot govern himself is not like to discharge his duty either to God or Men. And therefore St. Paul puts *Sobriety* first, as a *primary* and *principal* Virtue in which men are instructed by the *Christian* Religion, and which must be laid as the foundation both of *Piety* towards God, and of *Righteousness* to Men. The grace of God, for so he calls the Gospel, that brings Salvation unto all men, hath appeared; teaching us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live soberly, and righteously, and godly in this present world. It first teacheth us to live soberly; and unless we train up Children to this *Virtue* we must never expect that they will either live righteously or godly in this present World.

Especially, Children must be bred up to great *Sobriety* and *Temperance* in their *Diet*, which will retrench the fewel of other inordinate Appetites. It is a good Saying I have met with somewhere, *Magna pars virtutis est bene moratus venter*, a well manner'd and well govern'd Appetite, in matter of meats and drinks, is a great part of *Virtue*. I do

not

not mean, that Children should be brought up according to the Rules of a *Lessian* Diet, which sets an equal stint to all Stomachs, and is as senseless a thing as a *Law* would be which should enjoin that *Shoes* for all Mankind should be made upon one and the same *Last*. SERM. LI.

2dly, To a serious and unaffected *Piety* and *Devotion* towards *God*, still and quiet, real and substantial, without much shew and noise; and as free, as may be, from all *tricks* of Superstition, or *freaks* of *Enthusiasm*; which if *Parents* and *Teachers* be not very prudent, will almost unavoidably insinuate themselves into the Religion of Children; and when they are grown up will make them appear, to wise and sober Persons, phantastical and conceited; and render them very apt to impose their own foolish Superstitions and wild Conceits upon others, who understand Religion much better than themselves.

Let them be taught to honour and love *God* above all things, to serve him in private, and to attend constantly upon his publick Worship, and to keep their minds intent upon the several parts of it, without wandering and distraction: To pray to *God* as the Fountain of all Grace and the giver of every good and perfect gift: And to acknowledge Him, and to render *Thanks* to Him, as our most gracious and constant Benefactor, and the great Patron and Preserver of our Lives: To be careful to do what He commands, and to avoid what He hath forbidden: To be always under a lively sense and apprehension of his pure and all-seeing Eye, which beholds us in secret: And to do every thing in obedience to the Authority of that great Lawgiver, who is able to save and to destroy; and with an awful regard to the strict and impartial Judgment of the great Day.

3dly, To *Justice* and *Honesty*: To defraud and oppress no man; to be as good as their word, and



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3dly, To *Justice* and *Honesty*: To defraud and oppress no man; to be as good as their word, and

SERM. to perform all their Promises and Contracts; and  
 LI. endeavour to imprint upon their minds the Equity  
 of that *Great Rule*, which is so natural, and so  
 easy, that even Children are capable of it; I mean  
 that *Rule* which our *Blessed Saviour* tells us is the  
*Law and the Prophets*, namely, that we should do  
 to others as we would have others do to us if we  
 were in their Case and Circumstances, and they  
 in ours.

You that are *Parents* and have to do in the  
 World, ought to be just and equal in all your dea-  
 lings. In the first place for the sake of your own  
 Souls, and next for the sake of your Children:  
 Not only that you may entail no Curse upon the  
 Estate you leave them, but likewise that you may  
 teach them no Injustice by the Example you set  
 before them; which in this particular they will  
 be as apt to imitate as in any one thing; because  
 of the present worldly advantage which it seems  
 to bring, and because *Justice* is in truth a manly  
 Virtue, and least understood by Children; and  
 therefore *Injustice* is a Vice which they will soon-  
 est practise and with the least reluctance, because  
 they have the least knowledge of it in many par-  
 ticular Cases: And because they have so little sense  
 of this great Virtue, they should not be allowed  
 to cheat, no not in play and sport, even when they  
 play for little or nothing: For if they practise it  
 in that Case, and be unjust in a little they will be  
 much more tempted to be so when they can gain  
 a great deal by it.

I remember that *Zenophon* in his *Institution of  
 Cyrus*, which he designed for the *Idea* of a well  
 educated *Prince*, tells us this little but very instruc-  
 tive Story concerning young *Cyrus*: That his Go-  
 vernor, the better to make him understand the na-  
 ture of *Justice*, puts this Case to him: You see  
 there, says he to *Cyrus*, two Boys playing, of dif-  
 ferent stature; the lesser of them hath a very long  
 Coat,



Coat, and the bigger a very short one: Now says **SERM.**  
 he, if you were a Judge how would you dispose **LI.**  
 of these two Garments? *Cyrus* immediately, and  
 with very good reason as he thought, passeth this  
 sudden Sentence, That the taller Boy should have  
 the longer Garment, and he that was of lower  
 stature the shorter, because this certainly was fit-  
 test for them both: Upon which his Governor  
 sharply rebukes him to this purpose; telling him,  
 that if he were to make two Coats for them he  
 said well: but he did not put this Case to him as  
 a *Taylor* but as a *Judge*, and as such he had given  
 a wrong sentence: For a *Judge*, says he, ought  
 not to consider what is *most fit*, but what is *just*;  
 not who could make the *best use* of a thing, but  
 who hath the *most right* to it.

This I bring, partly to shew in what familiar  
 ways the Principles of Virtue may be insill'd in-  
 to Children; but chiefly to prove that *Justice* is a  
*manly Virtue*, and that there is nothing wherein  
 Children may be more easily misled, than in mat-  
 ter of *Right* and *Wrong*: Therefore Children should  
 be taught the general *Principles* and *Rules* of *Jus-*  
*tice* and *Righteousness*, because if we would teach  
 them to *do Justice* we must teach them to *know*  
 what *Justice* is. For many are unjust merely out  
 of Ignorance and for want of knowing better,  
 and cannot help it.

4thly, To *Charity*; I mean chiefly to the poor  
 and destitute; because this, as it is an *essential* so  
 it is a most *substantial* Part of Religion. Now to  
 encourage this Disposition in Children we must  
 not only give them the Example of it, but must  
 frequently inculcate upon them such Passages of  
*Scripture* as these, That *pure Religion and undefiled*  
*before God and the Father is this, to visit the father-*  
*less and the widows in their affliction*: That *as we*  
*sow in this kind, so shall we reap*: That *he shall*  
*have judgment without mercy who hath shewed no*  
*mercy*:

*mercy: That at the Judgment of the Great Day we shall in a very particular manner be called to an account for the practice or omission of this Duty, and shall then be absolved or condemned according as we have exercised or neglected this great Virtue of the Christian Religion.*

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## S E R M O N LII.

### Of the Education of Children.

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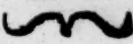
Proverbs xxii. 6.

*Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*

SERM. V.  
LII.

**T**HE good Education of Children consists in giving them good Example. This course David took in his Family, as appears by that solemn Resolution of his, *Psal. 101. 2. I will behave my self wisely in a perfect way, I will walk within my house with a perfect heart.* Let Parents and Masters of Families give good Example to their Children and Servants, in a constant serving of God in their Families, which will nourish Religion in those that are under their care: And let them also be Exemplary in a sober and holy Conversation before those that belong to them.

And let not your Children, as far as is possible, have any bad Examples to converse with, either among your Servants, or their own Companions; lest by walking with them they learn their way and get a blot to their Souls. There is a contagion in Example, and nothing doth more slyly insinuate itself

itself and gain upon us than a living and familiar **SERM.**  
Pattern; therefore, as much as in you lies, let **LII.**  
Children always have good Examples before them. 

Especially, let Parents themselves be exemplary to them in the best things, because their Example is of all other the most powerful, and carries greatest Authority with it. And without this, Instruction will signify very little, and the great force and efficacy of it will be lost. We shall find it very hard to persuade our Children to do that which they see we do not practise ourselves. For even Children have so much sense and sagacity as to understand that actions are more real than words, a more certain indication of what a man doth truly and inwardly believe. Example is the most lively way of teaching, and because Children are much given to imitation, it is likewise a very delightful way of instruction, and that of which Children are most capable; both because it is best understood, and apt to make the deepest impressions upon them.

So that Parents above all others, have one Argument to be religious and good themselves, for the sake of their Children. If you desire to have them good, the best way to make them so is to give them the Example of it in being good yourselves. For this reason Parents should take great care to do nothing but what is worthy of imitation. Your Children will follow you in what you do, therefore do not go before them in any thing that is evil. The evil Example of Parents is both a temptation and encouragement to Children to Sin, because it is a kind of Authority for what they do, and looks like a Justification of their wickedness.

With what reason canst thou expect that thy Children should follow thy good Instructions, when thou thyself givest them an ill Example? Thou dost but as it were beckon to them with thy head and shew them



SERM. them the way to Heaven by thy good Counsel, but  
 LII. thou takest them by the hand and leadeest them in the  
 way to Hell by thy contrary Example. Whenever you  
 swear, or tell a lye, or are passionate and furious, or  
 come drunk into your Family, you weaken the Au-  
 thority of your Commands, and lose all reverence  
 and obedience to them by contradicting your own  
 Precepts.

The Precepts of a good man are apt to raise and  
 inflame others to the imitation of them, but when  
 they come from one who is faulty and vicious in that  
 kind himself, they are languid and faint, and give  
 us no heart and encouragement to the exercise of  
 those Virtues which we plainly see they do not prac-  
 tise themselves. It is the *Apostle's* Argument, *Thou*  
*therefore that teachest another, teachest thou not thy self?*  
 Thou that teachest thy Children to speak truth, dost  
 thou tell a lye? Thou that sayest they must not  
 swear, dost thou prophane the Name of God by  
 customary Oaths and Curses? Thou art unfit to be  
*a guide of the blind, a light to them that are in Dark-*  
*ness, an instructor of the foolish, and a teacher of*  
*Babes; because thou thy self hast only a form of Know-*  
*ledge and of truth in the Law,* but art destitute of the  
 life and practice of it. In a word, if you be not  
 careful to give good Example to your Children, you de-  
 feat your own counsels and undermine the best in-  
 structions you can give them; and they will all be  
 spilt like water upon the barren Sands, they will have  
 no effect, they will bring forth no fruit.

VI. Good Education consists *in wise and early Re-*  
*straints from that which is evil, by seasonable Reproof*  
*and Correction:* And this also is one way of Instructi-  
 on: So *Solomon* tells us, *Prov. 29. 15. The Rod and*  
*Reproof giveth Wisdom:* And tho' both these do sup-  
 pose a Fault that is past, yet the great end of them  
 is to prevent the like for the future, and to be an ad-  
 monition to them for the time to come. And there-  
 fore whatever will probably be effectual for future

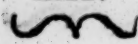
Caution

Caution and Amendment, ought to be sufficient in SERM.  
 this kind, because the End is always to give measure LII.  
 to the Means: And where a mild and gentle Re-  
 buke will do the business, Reproof may stop there  
 without proceeding farther: Or when that will not  
 do, if a sharp word or a severe admonition will be  
 effectual, the Rod may be spared.

Provided always, that your *Lenity* give no encouragement to Sin, and be so managed that Children may perceive that you are in good earnest, and resolved that if they will not reform they shall certainly be punish'd. And provided likewise, that your *Lenity* bear a due proportion to the nature and quality of the Fault. We must not use mildness in the case of a wilful and heinous Sin, especially if it be exemplary and of publick influence. To rebuke gently upon such an Occasion is rather to countenance the Fault, and seems to argue that we are not sensible enough of the Enormity of it, and that we have not a due dislike and detestation for it: such cold Reproofs as those which old *Eli* gave his Sons, *1 Sam.* 2. 23, 24. *Why do you such things? For I hear of your evil dealing by all this People;* that is, their carriage was such as gave publick Scandal: *Nay my Sons; for it is not a good Report that I hear, you make the Lord's People to transgress.*

Such a cold Reproof as this, where the Crime was so great and notorious, was a kind of allowance of it, and a partaking with them in their Sin; and so God interprets it, and therefore calls it, *a kicking at his Sacrifice, and a despising of his Offering*, Chap. 2. 19. And he threatens *Eli* with most terrible Judgments upon this very account, *because his Sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.*

So that our Severity must be proportioned to the Crime. Where the Fault is great, there greater severity must be used; so much at least as may be an effectual Restraint for the future. Here was *Eli's* miscarriage, that in the case of so great a Fault as his

SERM. LII.  Sons were guilty of, his proceeding was neither proportioned to the Crime, nor to the End of Reproof and Correction, which is Amendment for the future: But he used such a mildness in his Reproof of them, as was more apt to encourage than restrain them in their vile courses; For so the *Text* says, that *his Sons made themselves vile, and he restrained them not.*

There are indeed some Dispositions so very tender and tractable, that a gentle Reproof will suffice. But most Children are of that temper that Correction must be sometimes used, and a fond Indulgence in this Case is many times their utter ruin and undoing; and in truth not Love but Hatred. So the *Wise-man* tells us, *Prov. 13. 24. He that spareth the Rod hateth his Son, but he that loveth him chasteneth him betimes.* Chap. 19. 18. *Chasten thy Son while there is hope, and let not thy Soul spare for his Crying.* And again, Chap. 22. 15. *Foolishness is bound up in the heart of a Child, and the Rod of correction shall drive it far from him.* Chap. 23. 13, 14. *Withhold not correction from the child, for if thou beatest him with the rod he shall not die: Thou shalt beat him with the Rod, and shalt deliver his Soul from Hell.* Again, Chap. 29. 15. *The Rod and Reproof giveth wisdom, but a Child left to himself bringeth his Mother to shame:* He mentions the *Mother* emphatically, because she many times is most faulty in this fond indulgence; and therefore the shame and grief of it doth justly fall upon her.

So that Correction is of great use, and often necessary; and Parents that forbear it are not only cruel to their Children, but to themselves: For God many times punisheth those Parents very severely who have neglected this necessary piece of Discipline. There is hardly to be found in the whole *Bible* a more terrible temporal threatening than that concerning *Eli* and his House, for his fond indulgence to his



his Sons, who when they came to be Men, pro-<sup>SERM.</sup>  
 ved such horrible Scandals not only to their Fa-<sup>LII.</sup>  
 ther, but to the Priest's Office; and to that de-  
 gree as to *make the Sacrifices of the Lord to be ab-*  
*horred by all the People.* I will recite the *Threat-*  
*ning at large, for an Admonition to Parents that*  
*they be not guilty in this kind, 1 Sam. 3. 11, 12,*  
*13, 14. The Lord said to Samue', behold I will do*  
*a thing in Israel at which both the ears of every one*  
*that heareth it shall tingle: In that day I will per-*  
*form against Eli all things which I have spoken concern-*  
*ing his House; when I begin I will also make an end.*  
*For I have told him that I will judge his House for ever*  
*for the Iniquity of which he knoweth, because his Sons*  
*made themselves vile and he restrained them not: And*  
*therefore I have sworn unto the House of Eli, that the*  
*Iniquity of Eli's House shall not be purged with Sacrifice*  
*nor Offering for ever.* I know very well that this e-  
 normous wickedness of *Eli's* Sons was committed by  
 them after they were grown to be Men. But this In-  
 stance is nevertheless to my present purpose, there  
 being hardly any doubt to be made but that it was  
 the natural effect of a remiss and too indulgent an  
 Education.

Yea very often God doth correct and remarkably  
 punish fond Parents by those very Children who have  
 wanted due Reproof and Correction: Of which the  
*Scripture* gives us a remarkable Instance in *Adonijah*,  
 upon the mention of whose Rebellion against *David*  
 his Father, the *Text* takes particular notice of his  
 Father's extreme fondness of him, as both the pro-  
 curing and meritorious cause of it, *For his Father*  
*had not displeased him at any time in saying, why hast*  
*thou done so?* And on the contrary, the wise Son of  
*Sirach* tells us, that *he that chastiseth his Son shall have*  
*joy of him.*

VII. The next thing I shall mention as a part of  
 good Education is, *the bringing of Children to be pub-*  
*lickly*

SERM. *lickly catechised by the Minister, to prepare them for so-*  
 LII. *lemn Confirmation.*

It was with a particular respect to this work of *public Catechising*, and by way of introduction to it, that I at first propos'd to treat thus largely of the *good Education of Children*, hoping it might be of good use to handle this *Subject* more fully than it hath usually been done, at least to my knowledge, from the Pulpit.

And therefore I shall say something, and that very briefly concerning the *nature*, and concerning the *necessity* and great usefulness of *Catechising* Children.

*First*, For the *nature* of it, it is a particular way of teaching by *Question* and *Answer*, accommodated and fitted for the instruction of Children in the Principles of Religion. I do not indeed find, that this particular Method is any where enjoined in *Scripture*; but *Instruction* in general is: And I doubt not but that upon this general warrant *Parents* and *Ministers* may use that way of Instruction of Children which is most fit and proper to instil into them the Principles of Religion. It is true, that the word *κατηχησις*, from whence our word *Catechism* doth come, is used in *Scripture* to signify teaching in general: But it hath since by *ecclesiastical* Writers been appropriated to that particular way of Instruction which hath been long in use in the *Christian Church*, and is commonly called *Catechising*.

*Secondly*, As to the *necessity* and great usefulness of it; *Catechising* hath a particular advantage as to Children: Because they are subject to forgetfulness, and want of attention. Now *Catechising* is a good Remedy against both these; because by *Questions* put to them Children are forced to take notice of what is taught, and must give some *Answer* to the Question that is ask'd: And a *Catechism* being short, and containing in a little compass the most necessary Principles of Religion, it is the more easily remembered.

The

The great *usefulness* and indeed the *necessity* of it SERM. I.II. plainly appears by experience. For it very seldom happens, that Children which have not been catechised have any clear and competent knowledge of the Principles of Religion; and for want of this are incapable of receiving any great benefit by *sermons*, which suppose persons to be in some measure instructed beforehand in the main Principles of Religion.

Besides, that if they have no Principles of Religion fix'd in them, they become an easy Prey to Seducers. And we have had sad experience of this in our Age; and among many other dismal effects of our late civil Confusions this is none of the least, that *publick Catechising* was almost wholly disused, and *private* too in most Families: For had *Catechising* of Children been continued, it is very probable that this Age would have been infested with fewer *Errors* and with fewer *Schisms*; and that there would not have been so much *Apostacy* from the *Fundamentals* of Religion. For it is, I think, a true *Observation*, that *Catechising*, and the *History* of the *Martyrs* have been the two great *Pillars* of the *Protestant Religion*.

There being then so great a *necessity* and usefulness of this way of Instruction, I would earnestly recommend the practice of it to *Parents* and *Masters of Families* with respect to their *Children* and *Servants*. For I do not think that this Work should lie wholly upon *Ministers*. You must do your part at home, who by your constant residence in your Families have better and more easy opportunities of inculcating the Principles of Religion upon your *Children* and *Servants*. There you must prepare them for *publick Catechising*, that the Work of the *Minister* may not be too heavy upon him.

As to the part which concerns *Ministers*, I intend by God's Assistance, so soon as the business can be put into a good method, to begin this *Exercise*. And I do earnestly intreat all that have *young Children* and *Servants*, to bring such of them as are fit



SERM. to be publickly catechized and instructed in the Principles of Religion : And I shall as often as shall be thought expedient spend some time in this Work, between *Afternoon Prayers* and *Sermon*.

The *Catechism* to be used shall be that appointed in our *Liturgy*, which is short, and contains in it the chief Principles of the *Christian Religion*. And I shall make a short and plain explication of the Heads of it, suitable to the capacity of Children. And because this may not probably be of so great advantage to those who are of riper Years and Understandings, yet because Children are to be instructed as well as Men, I must intreat those who are like to carry away the least *profit* to bring with them the more *patience* : Especially since I shall for their sakes, in the constant course of my *Afternoon Sermons*, more largely and fully explain the chief Principles of the *Christian Belief* : A Work which you know I have some time ago entred upon.

VIII. The last thing I shall mention, and with which the State of *Childhood* ends, is the bringing of Children to the *Bishop*, to be solemnly confirmed, by their taking upon themselves the *Vow* which by their *Sureties* they entred into at their *Baptism*.

This is acknowledged by almost all *Sects* and *Parties* of *Christians* to be of *primitive Antiquity*, and of very great use when it is performed with that due preparation of persons for it, by the *Ministers* to whose charge they belong, and with that seriousness and solemnity which the nature of the thing doth require.

And to that end it were very desirable that *Confirmations* should be more frequent, and in smaller Numbers at a time ; that so the *Bishop* may apply himself more particularly to every Person that is to be confirmed, that by this means the thing may make the deeper impression and lay the stronger obligation upon them.

One thing more I could wish, both to prevent SERM. LII.  
 confusion, and for the ease also of the *Bishop* that  
 his work may not be endless, that *Ministers* would  
 take care that none may present themselves to the  
*Bishop* or be presented by the *Ministers*, to be con-  
 firmed a second time: Because a great many are wont  
 to offer themselves every time there is a *Confirmati-*  
*on*; which is both very disorderly and unreasonable,  
 there being every whit as little reason for a *second*  
*Confirmation*, as there is for a *second Baptism*: And if  
 any persons need so often to be *confirmed*, it is a  
 sign that *Confirmation* hath very little effect upon  
 them.

II. I proceed to the *Second* general *Head*, which  
 was to give some more particular *Directions* for the ma-  
 nagement of this *Work* of the good *Education* of  
*Children* in such a way as may be most effectual to its  
*End*.

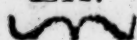
*First*, Endeavour as well as you can, to discover  
 the particular *temper* and *disposition* of *Children*, that  
 you may suit and apply your selves to it, and by  
 striking in with Nature may steer and govern them  
 in the sweetest and easiest way. This is like know-  
 ledge of the nature of the ground to be planted,  
 which *Husbandmen* are wont very carefully to en-  
 quire into, that they may apply the *Seed* to the *Soil*,  
 and plant in it that which is most proper for it:

*Quid quæq; ferat regio, quid quæq; recuset.*  
*Hic segetes, illic veniunt sælicius uvæ.*

Every *Soil* is not proper for all sorts of *Grain* or  
*Fruit*; one ground is fit for *Corn*, another for *Vines*:  
 And so it is in the *tempers* and *dispositions* of *Chil-*  
*dren*: Some are more capable of one *Excellency* and  
*Virtue* than another, and some more strongly incli-  
 ned to one *Vice* than another: Which is a great *Secret*  
 of *Nature* and *Providence*, and it is very hard to give  
 a just and satisfactory account of it.

SERM.

LII.



It is good therefore to know the particular Tempers of Children, that we may accordingly apply our care to them and manage them to the best advantage : That where we discern in them any forward inclinations to good, we may cast in such Seeds and Principles, as by their suitableness to their particular Tempers, we judge most likely to take soonest and deepest root : And when these are grown up, and have taken possession of the Soil, they will prepare it for the Seeds of other Virtues.

And so likewise when we discover in their Nature a more particular disposition and leaning towards any thing which is bad, we must with great diligence and care apply such Instructions and plant such Principles in them, as may be most effectual to alter this evil disposition of their Minds ; that whilst Nature is tender and flexible we may gently bend it the other way : And it is almost incredible what strange things by Prudence and Patience may be done towards the rectifying of a very perverse and crooked Disposition,

So that it is of very great use to observe and discover the particular Tempers of Children, that in all our instruction and management of them, we may apply our selves to their Nature and hit their peculiar Disposition : By this means we may lead and draw them to their Duty in human ways, and such as are much more agreeable to their Temper than constraint and necessity, which are harsh and churlish, and against the grain. Whatever is done with delight goes on cheerfully, but when Nature is compell'd and forc'd, things proceed heavily : Therefore, when we are forming and fashioning Children to Religion and Virtue, we should make all the advantage we can of their particular Tempers. This will be a good direction and help to us to conduct Nature in the way it will most easily go. Every Temper gives some particular advantage and *handle* whereby we may take hold of them and



and steer them more easily : But if we take a contrary course we must expect to meet with great difficulty and reluctance. SERM. LII.

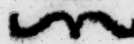
Such ways of Education as are prudently fitted to the particular dispositions of Children are like *Wind* and *Tide* together, which will make the Work go on amain : But those ways and methods which are applied cross to Nature are like *Wind* against *Tide*, which make a great stir and conflict, but a very slow progress. Not that I do, or can expect that all *Parents* should be *Philosophers*, but that they should use the best wisdom they have in a matter of so great concernment.

*Secondly*, In your instruction of Children endeavour to plant in them those *Principles* of Religion and Virtue which are most substantial, and are like to have the best influence upon the future government of their Lives, and to be of continual and lasting use to them. Look to the *Seed* you sow, that it be sound and good, and for the benefit and use of mankind : *This* is to be regarded, as well as the *Ground* into which the *Seed* is cast.

Labour to beget in Children a right apprehension of those things which are most fundamental and necessary to the knowledge of God and our Duty ; and to make them sensible of the great evil and danger of Sin ; and to work in them a firm belief of the next Life, and of the eternal Rewards and Recompences of it. And if these *Principles* once take root they will spread far and wide, and have a vast influence upon all their actions ; and unless some powerful Lust, or temptation to Vice hurry them away, they will probably accompany them, and stick by them as long as they live.

Many Parents, according to their best knowledge and apprehensions of Religion in which they themselves have been educated, and too often according to their Zeal without knowledge, do take great

care

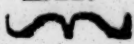
SERM. care to plant little and ill-grounded Opinions in the  
 L.II. minds of their Children, and so fashion them to a  
 Party, by infusing into them the particular Notions  
 and Phrases of a *Seet*, which when they come to be  
 examin'd have no substance, nor perhaps sense in  
 them: And by this means, instead of bringing them  
 up in the true and solid Principles of Christianity,  
 they take a great deal of pains to instruct them in  
 some doubtful Doctrines of no great moment in Re-  
 ligion, and perhaps false at the bottom; whereby  
 instead of teaching them to hate Sin they fix them  
 in Schism, and teach them to hate and damn all  
 those who differ from them and are opposite to them;  
 who yet are perhaps much more in the right, and far  
 better *Christians* than themselves.

And indeed nothing is more common and more  
 to be pitied, than to see with what a confident con-  
 tempt and scornful pity some ill-instructed and igno-  
 rant people will lament the blindness and ignorance  
 of those who have a thousand times more true know-  
 ledge and skill than themselves, not only in all other  
 things, but even in the practice as well as knowledge  
 of the Christian Religion; believing those who do  
 not relish their affected Phrases and uncouth Forms  
 of speech to be ignorant of the *Mystery* of the *Gos-  
 pel*, and utter strangers to the Life and Power of  
 Godliness.

But now what is the effect of this mistaken way  
 of Education: The *Harvest* is just answerable to the  
*Husbandry*,

*Infelix lolium & steriles dominantur avenæ;*

As they have sown, so they must expect to reap;  
 and instead of good Grain to have Cockle and Tares:  
*They have sown the Wind, and they shall reap the Whirl-  
 wind*; as the expression is in the *Prophet*; instead  
 of true Religion, and of a sober and peaceable Con-  
 versation, there will come up new and wild Opi-  
 nions,

nions, a factious and uncharitable spirit, a furious SERM.  
and boisterous zeal, which will neither suffer them- LII.  
selves to be quiet, nor any body that is about them. 

But if you desire to reap the effects of true Piety and Religion, you must take care to plant in Children the main and substantial Principles of *Christianity*, which may give them a general *byass* to holiness and goodness, and not to little particular Opinions, which being once fix'd in them by the strong prejudice of Education will hardly ever be rooted out.

*Thirdly*, Do all that in you lies to check and discourage in them the first beginnings of Sin and Vice: So soon as ever they appear pluck them up by the Roots. This is like the weeding of Corn, which is a necessary piece of good Husbandry. Vices like ill weeds grow apace, and if they once take to the Soil it will be hard to extirpate and kill them: But if we watch them and cut them up as soon as they appear, this will discourage the Root and make it dye.

Therefore take great heed that your Children be not habituated and accustomed to any evil course. A Vice that is of any considerable growth and continuance will soon grow obstinate, and having once spread its roots it will be a very difficult matter to clear the ground of it. A Child may be so long neglected till he be overgrown with Vice to that degree, that it may be out of the power of Parents ever to bring him to good fruit. If it once gain upon the depraved disposition of Children it will be one of the hardest things in the World to give a stop to it. It is the *Apostle's* caution to *take heed of being harden'd by the deceitfulness of Sin*, which they who go on in an evil course will most certainly be. We should observe the first appearances of evil in Children, and kill those young Serpents as soon as they stir lest they bite them to death.

*Fourthly*,



SERM.

LII.

*Fourthly*, Bring them, as soon as they are capable of it, to the *publick Worship* of God, where He hath promised his more especial presence and blessing. It is in *Zion*, the place of God's publick Worship, where *the Lord hath commanded the Blessing even Life for ever more*: There are the means which God hath appointed for the begetting and increasing of Grace in us: This is the *Pool* where the *Angel* useth to come and to *move the Waters*: Bring your Children hither, where if they diligently attend they may meet with an Opportunity of being *healed*.

And when they come from the *Church*, call them frequently to an account of what they have heard and learn'd there: This will make them both to attend more diligently to what they hear, and to lay it up in their Memories with greater care, and will fix it there so as to make a deeper and more lasting impression upon their Minds.

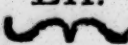
*Fifthly*, Be careful more especially to put them upon the exercise and practice of Religion and Virtue, in such Instances as their understanding and age are capable of. Teach them some short and proper *Forms of Prayer* to God, to be said by them devoutly upon their knees in private, at least every Morning and Evening. A great many Children neglect this, not from any ill disposition of mind, but because no body takes care to teach them how to do it. And if they were taught and put upon doing it, the habit and custom of any thing will after a little while make that easy and delightful enough, which they cannot afterwards be brought to without great difficulty and reluctancy.

*Knowledge* and *Practice* do mutually promote and help forward one another. *Knowledge* prepares and disposeth for *Practice*, and *Practice* is the best way to perfect *Knowledge* in any kind. Mere *Speculation* is a very raw and rude thing in comparison of that true and distinct knowledge which is gotten by *Practice* and *Experience*. The most exact skill in *Geography*

phy is nothing compar'd with the knowledge of that **SERM.**  
 Man, who besides the speculative part hath travelled **LII.**  
 over and carefully view'd the Countries he hath read  
 of. The most knowing man in the Art and Rules  
 of *Navigation* is no body in comparison of an experi-  
 enced *Pilot* and *Seaman*. Because knowledge per-  
 fected by practice is as much different from mere  
 Speculation as the skill of doing a thing is from be-  
 ing told how a thing is to be done. For men may  
 easily mistake Rules, but frequent Practice and Ex-  
 perience are seldom deceived. Give me a man that  
 constantly does a thing well, and that shall satisfy me  
 that he knows how to do it. That Saying of our  
 blessed Saviour, *If any man will do my will, he shall*  
*know of the Doctrine whether it be of God, or whether*  
*I speak of myself*, is a clear determination of this  
 matter, namely, that they understand the Will of  
 God best who are most careful to do it. And so  
 likewise the best way to know what God is, is to tran-  
 scribe his Perfections in our Lives and Actions;  
 to be *holy*, and *just*, and *good*, and *merciful* as He  
 is.

Therefore when the minds of Children are once  
 thoroughly possess'd with the true Principles of Reli-  
 gion, we should bend all our endeavours to put them  
 upon the practice of what they know: Let them ra-  
 ther be taught to do well than to talk well; rather to  
 avoid what is evil, in all its shapes and appearances,  
 and to practise their Duty in the several Instances of  
 it, than to *speak with the Tongues of Men and Angels*:  
*Unto Man he said, behold! the fear of the Lord, that*  
*is wisdom, and to depart from evil is understanding,*  
*Job. 28. 28. Hereby, saith St. John, we know that*  
*we know him, if we keep his Commandments: He that*  
*saith I know him, and keepeth not his Commandments is*  
*a liar, and the truth is not him, 1 Joh. 2. 2, 3, 4.*

Zenophon tells us, that the *Persians* instead of mak-  
 ing their Children *learned*, taught them to be *vir-*  
*tuous*; and instead of filling their heads with *fine Spe-*  
*culations*,

SERM. *culations*, taught them *honesty*, and *sincerity*, and *re-*  
 LII. *solution*; and endeavoured to make them *wise* and  
 *valiant*, *just* and *temperate*. *Lycurgus* also in the in-  
 stitution of the *Lacedemonian* Commonwealth took  
 no care about Learning, but only about the Lives  
 and Manners of their Children: Tho' I should think  
 that the care of both is best, and that Learning  
 would very much help to form the Manners of Chil-  
 dren, and to make them both wiser and better Men:  
 And therefore, with the leave of so great and wise  
 a *Lawgiver*, I cannot but think that this was a de-  
 fect in his *Institution*: Because Learning, if it be un-  
 der the conduct of true wisdom and goodness, is not  
 only an Ornament but a great Advantage to the  
 better Government of any Kingdom or Common-  
 wealth.

*Sixthly*, There must be great care and diligence  
 used in this whole business of *Education*, and more  
 particularly in the *Instruction* of Children. There  
 must be *line upon line, and precept upon precept, here*  
*a little and there a little*, as the *Prophet* expresseth it,  
*Isai. 28. 10.* The Principles of Religion and Virtue  
 must be instill'd and dropt into them by such degrees  
 and in such a measure as they are capable of recei-  
 ving them: For Children are narrow-mouth'd Ves-  
 sels, and a great deal cannot be poured into them at  
 once.

And they must also be accustomed to the practice  
 and exercise of Religion and Goodness by degrees,  
 till Holiness and Virtue have taken root, and they  
 be well settled and confirm'd in a good course. Now  
 this requires constant attendance and even the pati-  
 ence of the Husbandman to wait for the fruit of our  
 labours.

In some Children the Seeds that are sown fall into  
 a greater depth of earth, and therefore are of a slow  
 disclosure, and it may be a considerable time before  
 they appear above ground; it is long before they  
 shoot and grow up to any height, and yet they may  
 after-



afterwards be very considerable : *Which* as an ingenious Author observes, *should excite the care and prevent the despair of Parents* : For if their Children be not such speedy Spreaders and Branchers as the Vine, they may perhaps prove

SERM.  
LII.

Sir H. W.

—*proles tardè crescentis Olivæ.*

It is a work of great pains and difficulty to rectify a perverse Disposition. It is more easy to *palliate* the corruption of Nature, but the *cure* of it requires time and careful looking to. An evil temper and inclination may be covered and conceal'd, but it is a great work to conquer and subdue it. It must first be check'd and stopp'd in its course, and then weaken'd and the force of it be broken by degrees, and at last, if it be possible, destroyed and rooted out.

*Seventhly and lastly*, To all these means we must add our constant and earnest *Prayers* to God for our Children, that his Grace may take an early possession of them ; that he would give them virtuous inclinations and towardly dispositions for goodness : And that he would be pleased to accompany all our endeavours to that end with his powerful Assistance and Blessing ; without which, all that we can do will prove ineffectual. *Parents may plant, and Ministers may water, but it is God that must give the increase.*

Be often then upon your knees for your Children. Do not only teach them to pray for themselves, but do you likewise with great fervour and earnestness commend them to God, and to the power of his Grace, which alone is able to sanctify them. Apply yourselves to the Father of lights ; from whom comes every good and perfect gift : Beg his Holy Spirit, and ask divine knowledge and wisdom for them of Him, who giveth to all liberally and upbraideth no man : Beseech Him to season their tender years with his Fear, which

SERM. *is the beginning of Wisdom*: Pray for them as *Abraham*  
 LII. did for *Ishmael*, *Oh that Ishmael may live in thy sight*.

Many Parents, having found all their endeavours for a long time together ineffectual, have at length betook themselves to *Prayer*, earnest and importunate *Prayer* to God, as their last Refuge. *Monica*, the Mother of *St. Austin*, by the constancy and importunity of her Prayers, obtained of God the Conversion of her Son, who proved afterwards so great and glorious an Instrument of good to the Church of God: According to what *St. Ambrose Bishop* of *Milan*, to encourage her to persevere in her fervent Prayers for her Son, had said to her, *Fieri non potest ut filius tot lachrymarum pereat*: It cannot be, says he, that a Son of so many Prayers and Tears should miscarry. God's Grace is free, but it is not unlikely but that God will at last give in this Blessing to our earnest Prayers and faithful Endeavours.

Therefore pray for them *without ceasing*, pray and faint not. Great importunity in Prayer seldom fails of a gracious answer: Our *B. Saviour* spake two *Parables* on purpose to encourage us herein: Not because God is moved, much less because he is tired out with our Importunity; but because it is an argument of our firm belief and confidence in his great Goodness: And to them that believe all things are possible, says our *B. Lord*, *To whom*, &c.

## S E R M O N LIII.

Of the Education of Children.

Proverbs xxii. 6.

*Train up a Child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it.*

I Proceed to the next general Head which I proposed, namely, SERM.  
LIII.  
 III. *To discover some of the more remarkable and common Miscarriages in the management of this Work.* I do not hereby mean gross neglects for want of care, but mistakes and miscarriages for want of prudence and skill, even when there is no want of care and diligence in Parents and Instructors. And I shall for Method's sake reduce the more considerable and common miscarriages to these three Heads.

*First, In matter of Instruction.*

*Secondly, In matter of Example.*

*Thirdly, In matter of Reproof and Correction.*

I. In matter of *Instruction.* Parents do very often mainly miscarry in not teaching their Children the true difference between Good and Evil, and the degrees of them: As when we teach them any thing is a Sin that really is not, or that any thing is not a Sin which in truth is so: Or when we teach them to lay more stress and weight upon things than they will bear; making that which perhaps is only convenient to be in the highest degree necessary, or that which it may be is only inconvenient, or may be an occasion of Scandal to some weak Christians, to be a Sin in its own nature damnable.

Parents do likewise lay too great a weight upon things, when they are as diligent to instruct them in



SERM. lesser things, and as strict in enjoining them, and as  
 LIII. severe in punishing the commission or neglect of  
 them, according as they esteem them *good* or *evil*,  
 as if they were *the weightier things of the Law* and  
 matters of the greatest moment in Religion.

Thus I have known very careful and well-meaning Parents that have with great severity restrained their Children in the wearing of their hair: Nay I can remember since the wearing of it below their Ears was looked upon as a Sin of the first magnitude; and when *Ministers* generally, whatever their *Text* was, did in every *Sermon* either find or make an occasion with great severity to reprove the great Sin of *long hair*; and if they saw any one in the *Congregation* guilty in that kind, they would point him out particularly, and let fly at him with great zeal.

I have likewise known some Parents that have strictly forbidden their Children the use of some sorts of *Recreations* and *Games* under the notion of heinous Sins, upon a mistake that because there was in them a mixture of *Fortune* and *Skill* they were therefore unlawful; a Reason which I think hath no weight and force in it, tho' I do not deny but human Laws may for very prudent Reasons either restrain or forbid the use of these *Games*, because of the boundless expence both of *Money* and *Time* which is many times occasion'd by them.

I have known others, nay perhaps the same Persons, that would not only allow but even encourage their Children to despise the very *Service of God* under some *Forms*, which according to their several apprehensions they esteemed to be *superstitious* or *factions*. But this I have ever thought to be a thing of most dangerous consequence, and have often observed it to end either in the neglect or contempt of all Religion.

And how many Parents teach their Children *doubtful Opinions*, and lay great stress upon them as if they were *saving* or *damning Points*; and hereby  
 set

set such an edge and keenness upon them for or against SERM.  
 some indifferent modes and *circumstances* of God's LIII.  
 Worship, as if the very *Being* of a *Church* and the *Essence* of *Religion* were concerned in them?

These certainly are great *Mistakes*, and many times have very pernicious effects, thus to confound things which are of so wide and vast a difference as *good* and *evil*, *lawful* and *unlawful*, *indifferent* and *necessary*. For when Children come to be Men, and to have a free and larger view of the World, and shall find by the contrary practice of very wise and serious Persons, that they have quite different apprehensions of these matters, and do not think that to be a *Sin* which their Parents have so strictly forbidden them under that notion, and many times punished them more severely for the doing of it than if they had told a *Lye*, this may make them apt to question whether any thing be a *Sin*: And the violence which they offer to their Consciences, and the *strain* that they give them upon such an occasion, by complying with the general practice of others contrary to the Principles of their Education, doth many times open a gap for great and real Sins.

Besides, that Children which are bred up in high Prejudices *for* or *against* indifferent *Opinions* or *Practices* in Religion, do usually when they are grown up prove to be Men of narrow and contracted Spirits, peevish and froward and uncharitable, and many times great *Bigots* and *Zealots* either in the way of *Superstition* or *Faction*, according to the *Principles* which have been instill'd into them to *byass* them either way: And very hardly do they ever quit themselves so clearly of their Prejudices, as to become wise and peaceable and substantial Christians.

In short if we carefully observe it, we shall find that when Children have been thus indiscreetly educated, their Religion differs as much from that of sober and judicious Christians, as the *Civil* behaviour and conversation of those who have been unskillfully

SERM. and conceitedly taught how to carry themselves, does  
 LIII. from the behaviour of those who have had a more  
 free and generous Education.

II. In matter of *Example*. There are many Parents whose Lives are Exemplary in the main, who yet seem to use too great a freedom before their Children. It is an old Rule, and I think a very good one,

*Maxima debetur pueris reverentia,*

*There is a very great reverence due to Children.* There are many things which are not Sins, and therefore may lawfully be done, which yet it may not be prudent and expedient to do before all persons. There are some words and actions so trivial and light, that they are not fit to be said or done before those for whom we have a reverence. There is a certain freedom of Conversation which is only proper among Equals in Age and Quality, which if we use before our Superiors and Betters, we seem to contemn them; if before our Inferiors, they will go nigh to contemn us.

It ought to be consider'd, that Children do not understand the exact limits of *good* and *evil*, so that if in our words or actions we go to the utmost bounds of that which is lawful, we shall be in danger of shewing them the way to that which is unlawful. Children are not wont to be careful of their steps, and therefore we will not venture them to play about a Precipice, or near a dangerous Place, where yet Men that will take care may go safely enough. And therefore Parents should be very careful to keep their Children from the Confines of Evil, and at as great a distance from it as they can. And to this end their words and actions should ever be temper'd with gravity and circumspection, that Children may not see or hear any thing which may acquaint them with the approaches to Sin, or carry them to the Borders of Vice;



Vice; lest they should not stop just there, but take a step further than you intended they should go. SERM. LIII.

III. In matter of *Reproof* and *Correction*; many religious and careful Parents are guilty of *two* great Miscarriages in this Part of Education.

*First*, Of too much *rigor* and *severity*; which especially with some sort of Tempers, hath very ill success. The first experiment that should be made upon Children should be to allure them to their Duty, and by reasonable inducements to gain them to the love of Goodness; by *Praise* and *Reward*, and sometimes by *Shame* and *Disgrace*: And if this will do, there will be no occasion to proceed to Severity; especially not to great Severities, which are very unsuitable to Human Nature. A mixture of prudent and seasonable *Reproof* or *Correction* when there is occasion for it, may do very well; but *Whips* are not the *Cords of a Man*: Human Nature may be driven by them, but it must be led by sweet and gentler ways.

*Speusippus* caused the Pictures of *Joy* and *Gladness* to be set round about his *School*, to signify that the business of Education ought to be rendered as pleasant as may be: And indeed Children stand in need of all the enticements and encouragements to Learning and Goodness. *Metus haud diuturni Magister officii*, says *Tully*; *Fear* alone will not teach a Man his Duty and hold him to it for any long time: For when that is removed, Nature will break loose and do like itself: Besides, that frequent *Corrections* make Punishments to lose their awe and force, and are apt to spoil the Disposition of Children and to harden them against Shame; and after a while they will despise *Correction*, when they find they can endure it.

Great Severities do often work an effect quite contrary to that which was intended: And many times those who were bred up in a very severe *School*, hate Learning ever after for the sake of the Cruelty that was used to force it upon them: And so like-

SERM. wise an Endeavour to bring Children to Piety and  
 LI. Goodness by unreasonable strictness and rigour does  
 W often beget in them a lasting disgust and prejudice  
 against Religion, and teacheth them, as *Erasmus*  
 says, *virtutem simul odisse & nōsse*, to hate virtue at the  
 same time that they teach them to know it: For by this  
 means Virtue is represented to the minds of Children  
 under a great disadvantage, and good and evil are  
 brought too near together: So that whenever they  
 think of Religion and Virtue, they remember the  
 Severity which was wont to accompany the Instruc-  
 tions about it; and the natural hatred which men  
 have for Punishment is by this means derived upon  
 Religion itself. And indeed how can it be expected  
 that Children should love their Duty, when they ne-  
 ver hear of it but with a handful of *Rods* shak'd over  
 them?

I insist upon this the more, because I do not re-  
 member to have observed more notorious Instances  
 of great miscarriage, than in the Children of very  
 strict and severe Parents; of which I can give no o-  
 ther account but this, that Nature when it is thus  
 overcharged recoils the more terribly: It hath some-  
 thing in it like the *Spring* of an Engine, which be-  
 ing forcibly press'd does upon the first liberty return  
 back with so much the greater violence: In like  
 manner the vicious dispositions of Children, when  
 restrain'd merely by the severity of Parents, do  
 break forth strangely as soon as ever they get loose  
 and from under their Discipline.

Secondly, Another Miscarriage in this matter is,  
 when Reproof and Correction are accompanied and  
 managed with Passion. This is to betray one Fault,  
 and perhaps a greater, in the punishment of another.  
 Besides, that this makes Reproof and Correction to  
 look like Revenge and Hatred, which usually does  
 not persuade and reform but provoke and exasperate.  
 And this probably may be one reason of the *Apostle's*  
 admonition

admonition, *Parents provoke not your Children unto wrath*, because *that* is never likely to have any good effect. *Correction* is a kind of *Physick*, which ought never to be administred in *Passion*, but upon counsel and good advice. SERM. LIII.

And that *Passion* is incident to *Parents* upon this occasion, the *Apostle* tells us when he says, that *the Parents of our flesh chasten us for their pleasure*, Heb. 10. 12. that is, they do it many times to gratify their *Passion*, but *God* chastens us *for our profit*, not in *Anger* but with a design to do us good: And can we have a better Pattern than our heavenly Father to imitate?

A *Father* is as it were a *Prince* and a *Judge* in his *Family*: There he gives *Laws*, and inflicts *Censures* and *Punishments* upon *Offenders*. But how misbecoming a thing would it be to see a *Judge* pass Sentence upon a man in *Choler*? It is the same thing to see a *Father* in the *Heat* and *Fury* of his *Passion* correct his *Child*. If a *Father* could but see himself in this *Mood*, and how ill his *Passion* becomes him, instead of being angry with his *Child* he would be out of *Patience* with himself. I proceed to the next thing I proposed, namely,

IV. To make out the truth of the *Proposition* contained in the *Text*, by shewing how *the good Education of Children comes to be of so great advantage*, and to have so good and lasting an influence upon their whole *Lives*.

I confess there are some wild and savage Natures, monstrous and prodigious Tempers, hard as the Rocks, and barren as the Sand upon the Sea-shore; which discover strong and early propensions to vice, and a violent antipathy to Goodness. Such Tempers are next to desperate, but yet they are not utterly intrac-table to the Grace of God and the religious Care of Parents.

I hope such Tempers as these are very rare, tho' God is pleased they should sometimes appear in the



SERM. World, as instances of the great corruption and degeneracy of human Nature, and of the great need of divine Grace. But surely there is no Temper that is absolutely and irrecoverably prejudiced against that which is good. This would be so terrible an Objection against the Providence of God as would be very hard to be answered. God be thanked most Tempers are tractable to good Education, and there is very great probability of the good success of it, if it be carefully and wisely managed.

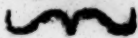
And for the confirmation of this *Truth* I shall instance in *two* very great *Advantages* of a religious and virtuous Education of Children.

1<sup>st</sup>. It gives Religion and Virtue the advantage of the first Possession.

2<sup>dly</sup>. The Advantage of Habit and Custom.

*First*, Good Education gives Religion and Virtue the *Advantage* of the *first Possession*. The Mind of Man is an active Principle, and will be employed about something or other. It cannot stand idle, and will therefore take up with that which first offers itself. So soon as Reason puts forth itself, and the Understanding begins to be exercised, the Mind of Man discovers a natural thirst after Knowledge, and greedily drinks in that which comes first. If it have not the *Waters of Life* and the *pure streams of Goodness* to allay that thirst, it will seek to quench it in the filthy *Puddles* and impure *Pleasures* of this World.

Now since Children will be busying their Minds about something, it is good that they should be entertained with the best things, and with the best Notions and Principles of which their Understanding and Age are capable. It is a happy thing to be principled, and, as I may say, *prejudiced* the better way, and that Religion should get the first possession of their Hearts. For it is certainly a great Advantage to Religion to be planted in a tender and fresh Soil.

Soil. And if *Parents* be careless and neglect this SERMON.  
 advantage, the *Enemy* will be sure to sow his *Tares* LIII.  
 whilst the *Husbandman* is asleep. 

Therefore we should prevent the *Devil* by giving  
*God* and *Goodness* an early possession of our Chil-  
 dren, and by letting Him into their Hearts betimes.  
*Possession* is a great Point, and it is of mighty conse-  
 quence to have Nature planted with good Seeds be-  
 fore vicious inclinations spring up and grow into  
 Strength and Habit.

I know that there is a spiteful *Proverb* currant in  
 the World, and the *Devil* hath taken care to spread  
 it to the discouragement of an early Piety, *A young*  
*Saint and an old Devil*; but notwithstanding this, a  
 young Saint is most likely to prove an old one.  
*Solomon* to be sure was of this mind, and I make no  
 doubt but he made as wise and true *Proverbs* as any  
 body hath done since: *Him* only excepted who was  
 a much greater and wiser Man than *Solomon*.

Secondly, Good Education gives likewise the *Ad-*  
*vantage* of *Habit* and *Custom*; and *Custom* is of  
 mighty force. It is, as *Pliny* in one of his *Epistles*  
 says of it, *efficacissimus omnium rerum Magister, the*  
*most powerful and effectual Master in every kind.* It  
 is an acquired and a sort of *second Nature*, and next  
 to nature it self a principle of greatest power. *Cu-*  
*stom* bears a huge sway in all human actions. Men  
 love those things and do them with ease to which  
 they have been long inured and accustomed. And  
 on the contrary men go against *Custom* with great  
 regret and uneasiness.

And among all others, *that Custom* is most strong  
 which is begun in Childhood: And we see in Expe-  
 rience the strange power of Education in forming  
 persons to Religion and Virtue. Now Education is  
 nothing but certain Customs planted in Childhood,  
 and which have taken deep Root whilst Nature was  
 tender.

We

SERM.

LIII.

We see likewise in common experience how dangerous an evil Habit and Custom is, and how hard to be alter'd. Therefore the *Cretians*, when they would curse a Man to purpose, wish'd that the *Gods* would engage him in some *bad Custom*, looking upon a Man after that to be irrecoverably lost. So on the other side, to be engaged in a *good Custom* is an unspeakable advantage; especially for Children to be habituated to a holy and virtuous course, before the Habits of Sin and Vice have taken root and are confirm'd in them.

We are too naturally inclin'd to that which is evil: But yet this ought not to discourage us, because it is certain in Experience that a contrary *Custom* hath done much in many cases, even where *Nature* hath been strongly inclin'd the other way. *Demosthenes* did by great Resolution and almost infinite pains, and after a long Habit, alter the natural imperfection of his Speech, and even in despite of Nature became the most eloquent Man perhaps that ever liv'd. And this amounts even to a *Demonstration*, for *what hath been done may be done*.

So that it is not universally true which *Aristotle* says, *That Nature cannot be altered*. It is true indeed in the Instance in which he gives in throwing a Stone upward; ye cannot, says he, by any Custom, nay tho' you fling it up never so often, teach a Stone to ascend of it self: And so it is in many other instances in which *Nature* is *peremptory*: But nature is not always so; but sometimes hath a great latitude: As we see in young Trees, which tho' they naturally grow straight up, yet being gently bent may be made to grow any way. But above all, *moral* inclinations and habits do admit of great alteration, and are subject to the Power of a contrary Custom.

Indeed Children when they come to be Men should take great care that they do not owe their Religion only to *Custom*; but they should upon consideration and due examination of the grounds of it, so far as they



they are capable of doing it, make it their *Choice*. SERM. LIII.  
 And yet for all that we must not deny the best Religion in the World this greatest advantage of all other. It is certainly a great happiness for Children to be inclined to that which when they come to understand themselves they would make their Choice, if they were indifferent: But an indifferency cannot be preserved in Children: And therefore since they will certainly be *byassed* one way or other, there is all the reason in the World why we should endeavour to *byass* them the better way. Parents may often mistake about what is best, but if they love their Children they cannot but wish and endeavour that they may be good and do what is best.

I come now to the *last Head* I proposed, which was,

V. To endeavour by the most powerful *Arguments* I can offer, to stir up and persuade those whose Duty this is, to discharge it with great care and Conscience.

If the foregoing *Discourse* be true, what can be said to those who are guilty in the highest degree of the gross neglect of this great Duty? Who neither by *Instruction*, nor *Example*, nor *Restraint* from evil, do endeavour to make their Children good. Some Parents are such *Monsters*, I had almost said *Devils*, as not to know how to give good things to their Children; but instead of bread give them a stone, instead of fish give them a Serpent, instead of an egg give them a scorpion, as our Saviour expresseth it.

These are *evil* indeed, who train up their Children for ruin and destruction; in the service of the Devil, and in the Trade and Mystery of iniquity; Who, instead of teaching them the *Fear of the Lord*, infuse into them the Principles of *Atheism*, and *Irreligion*, and *Prophaneness*: Instead of teaching them to love and reverence Religion, they teach them to hate and despise it, and to make a mock both of *Sin* and *Holiness*: Instead of training them up in the knowledge of

SERM. of the Holy Scriptures which are able to make men wise  
 LIII. unto Salvation they do *ædificare ad Gehennam*, they edify  
 them for hell, by teaching them to prophane that holy  
 Book, and to abuse the Word of God which they  
 ought to tremble at, by turning it into Jest and Rail-  
 lery: Instead of teaching them to pray and to bless  
 the Name of God, they teach them to blaspheme that  
 great and terrible Name, and to prophane it by their  
 continual Oaths and Imprecations: And instead of  
 bringing them to God's Church, they carry them to  
 the Devil's Chappels, to Playhouses and Places of de-  
 bauchery, those Schools and Nurseries of Lewdness and  
 Vice.

Thus they, who ought to be the great Teachers  
 and Examples of Holiness and Virtue, are the chief en-  
 couragers and patterns of Vice and Wickedness in their  
 Children; and instead of restraining them from evil,  
 they countenance them in it, and check all forward  
 inclinations to Goodness; till at last they make them  
 ten times more the Children of Wrath, than they were  
 by that corrupt Nature which they derived from  
 them; and hereby treasure up, both for their Chil-  
 dren and themselves, wrath against the Day of wrath  
 and the Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God.

But I hope there are few or none such here. They  
 do not use to frequent God's House and Worship.  
 And therefore I shall apply my self to those who are  
 not so notoriously guilty in this kind, tho' they are  
 greatly faulty in neglecting the good Education of  
 their Children. And for the greater conviction of  
 such Parents, I shall offer to them the following Con-  
 siderations.

First, Consider what a sad Inheritance you have  
 conveyed to your Children. You have transmitted  
 to them corrupt and depraved Natures, evil and vi-  
 cious Inclinations: You have begotten them in your  
 own Image and likeness, so that by Nature they are  
 Children of wrath. Now methinks Parents that have  
 a due sense of this should be very solicitous, by the  
 best

best means they can use, to free them from that SERM.  
Curse; by endeavouring to correct those perverse LIII.  
dispositions and cursed inclinations which they have  
transmitted to them. Surely you ought to do all you  
can to repair that broken Estate which from you is  
descended upon them.

When a Man hath by *Treason tainted his Blood* and  
*forfeited his Estate*, with what grief and regret doth  
he look upon his Children, and think of the Injury  
which hath been done to them by his Fault? and  
how solicitous is he, before he dye, to petition the  
*King* for favour to his Children? How earnestly  
doth he charge his Friends to be careful of them and  
kind to them? That by these means he may make  
the best reparation he can of their *Fortune* which hath  
been ruin'd by his *Fault*.

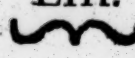
And have Parents such a tenderness for their Chil-  
dren, in reference to their Estate and condition in  
this World; and have they none for the good  
estate of their Souls and their eternal condition in a-  
nother World? If you are sensible that their *Blood*  
is tainted, and that their best *Fortunes* are ruin'd by  
your sad *Misfortune*; why do you not bestir your  
selves for the repairing of God's Image in them?  
Why do you not *travel in birth till Christ be formed*  
*in them*? Why do you not pray earnestly to God,  
and give Him no rest, who hath *reprieved* and it may  
be pardoned you, that he would extend his grace to  
them also, and grant them the Blessings of his *New*  
*Covenant*?

All your Children are begotten of the *Bond-woman*;  
therefore we should pray as *Abraham* did, *O that*  
*Ismael may live in thy sight*; *O that these Sons of*  
*Hagar* may be Heirs of a Blessing.

Secondly, Consider in the next place, that good Edu-  
cation is the very best Inheritance that you can leave  
to your Children. It is a wise *Saying of Solomon*  
*Ecc. 7. 11.* that *Wisdom is good with an Inheritance*;  
but surely an *Inheritance*, without *Wisdom* and *Virtue*  
to



SERM. to manage it, is a very pernicious thing. And yet  
 LIII. how many Parents are there who omit no care and

 Industry to get an Estate that they may leave it to their Children, but use no means to form their Minds and Manners for the right use and enjoyment of it; without which it had been much happier for them to have been left in great Poverty and straits?

Dost thou love thy Child? This is true love to any one, to do the best for him we can. Of all your toil and labour for your Children, this may be all the fruit they may reap, and all that they may live to enjoy, the advantage of a good Education, all other things are uncertain. You may raise your Children to *Honour*, and settle a Noble *Estate* upon them to support it: You may leave them, as you think, to faithful *Guardians*, and by kindness and obligation procure them many *Friends*: and when you have done all this, their *Guardians* may prove unfaithful and treacherous, and in the Changes and Revolutions of the World their *Honours* may slip from under them, and their *Riches* may take themselves wings and fly away: And when these are gone, and they come to be nipp'd with the Frosts of Adversity, their *Friends* will fall off like leaves in *Autumn*. *This is a sore evil, which yet I have seen under the Sun.*

But if the good Education of your Children hath made them wise and virtuous, you have provided an Inheritance for them which is out of the reach of Fortune, and *cannot be taken from them*. *Crates* the *Philosopher* used to stand in the highest Places of the City, and cry out to the Inhabitants, O ye People! why do you toil to get *Estates* for your Children, when you take no care of their Education? This is, as *Diogenes* said, to take care of the *Shoe*, but none of foot that is to wear it; to take great pains for an *Estate* for your Children, but none at all to teach them how to use it; that is, to take great care to undo them, but none to make them happy.

*Thirdly,*

Thirdly, Consider that by a careful and Religious SERM.  
 Education of your Children you provide for your LIII.  
 own Comfort and Happiness. However they  
 happen to prove, *you* will have the comfort of a good  
 Conscience and of having done your Duty. If they  
 be good, they are matter of great Comfort and Joy  
 to their Parents. *A wise Son, saith Solomon maketh a*  
*glad Father.* It is a great satisfaction to see that  
 which we have planted to thrive and grow up; to find  
 the good effect of our care and industry, and that  
 the Work of our hands doth prosper. The *Son* of  
*Sirach*, among several things for which he reckons a  
 Man happy, mentions this in the first place, *He that*  
*hath joy of his Children,* Ecclus. 25. 7.

On the contrary in wicked Children the honour  
 of a Family fails, our Name withers, and in the  
 next Generation will be quite blotted out: Whereas  
 a hopeful Posterity is a prospect of a kind of *Eterni-*  
*ty.* We cannot leave a better and more lasting *Mo-*  
*nument* of our selves, than in wise and virtuous Chil-  
 dren. *Buildings* and *Books* are but *dead* things in  
 comparison of these *living Memorials* of our selves.

By the good Education of Children you provide  
 for your selves some of the best Comforts both for  
 this World and the other. For *this World*; and that  
 at such a Time when you most stand in need of Com-  
 fort, I mean the Time of *Sickness* and *old Age.* Wise  
 men have been wont to lay up some *præsidia Senectu-*  
*tis,* something to support them in that gloomy and  
 melancholy Time, as *Books*, and *Friends*, or the  
 like. But there is no such external Comfort at such  
 a time as good and dutiful Children. They will  
 then be the *light of our Eyes*, and the *Cordial* of our  
 fainting Spirits; and will recompence all our former  
 care of *them* by their present care of *us*: And when  
 we are decaying and withering away, we shall have  
 the pleasure to see our *Youth* as it were *renewed*, and  
 our selves flourishing again in our Children. The

Son

SERM. Son of *Sirach* speaking of the comfort which a good  
 LIII. Father hath in a well educated Son, *Though he dye,*  
 says he, *yet he is as if he were not dead, for he hath*  
 left one behind him that is like himself. *While he lived*  
*he saw and rejoiced in him, and when he died he was*  
*not sorrowful,* Ecclus. 30. 4, 5.

Whereas on the contrary, a foolish Son is, as *Solomon* tells us, a heaviness to his Mother, the Miscarriage of a Child being apt most tenderly to affect the Mother. Such Parents as neglect their Children, do as it were provide so many Pains and Aches for themselves against they come to be Old. And rebellious Children are, to their infirm and aged Parents so many aggravations of an evil day, so many burthens of their Age: They help to bow them down and to bring their gray hairs so much the sooner with sorrow to the grave. They do usually repay their Parents all the neglect of their Education by their undutiful carriage towards them.

And good Children will likewise be an unspeakable Comfort to us in the Other World. When we come to appear before God at the Day of Judgment, to be able to say to Him, *Lo! here am I and the Children which thou hast given me:* How will this comfort our Hearts, and make us lift up our Heads with joy in that Day?

Fourthly, Consider that the surest Foundation of the publick welfare and happiness is laid in the good Education of Children. Families are increased by Children, and Cities and Nations are made up of Families. And this is a matter of so great concernment both to Religion and the Civil happiness of a Nation, that anciently the best constituted Commonwealths did commit this care to the Magistrate more than to Parents.

When *Antipater* demanded of the Spartans fifty of their Children for Hostages, they offer'd rather to deliver to him twice as many Men; so much did they value the loss of their Country's Education. But

now



now amongst us this Work lies chiefly upon Pa-  
rents. There are several ways of reforming Men; SERM. LIII.  
by the *Laws* of the *civil Magistrate*, and by the  
publick preaching of *Ministers*. But the most like-  
ly and hopeful Reformation of the World must  
begin with *Children*. Wholsome *Laws* and good  
*Sermons* are but slow and late ways: The timely and  
the most compendious way is good Education. This  
may be an effectual *Prevention* of evil, whereas all  
after-ways are but *Remedies*, which do always sup-  
pose some neglect and omission of timely care.

And becaule our *Laws* leave so much to Parents,  
our Care should be so much the greater; and we  
should remember that we bring up our Children for  
the *Publick*, and that if they live to be *Men*, as they  
come out of our hands they will prove a publick  
Happinefs or Mischief to the Age. So that we can  
no way better deserve of Mankind and be greater  
Benefactors to the World, than by peopling it with  
a *righteous Offspring*. Good Children are the hopes  
of Posterity, and we cannot leave the World a bet-  
ter *Legacy* than well disciplin'd Children. This gives  
the World the best Security that Religion will be  
propagated to Posterity, and that the *Generations to*  
*come* shall know God, and *the Children that are to*  
*be born shall fear the Lord*.

This was the great Glory of *Abraham*, next to his  
being *the Friend of God*, that he was the *Father of the*  
*Faithful*. And the careful Education of Children  
in the *nurture and admonition of the Lord*, is so honou-  
rable to Parents, that God himself would not pass it  
by in *Abraham* without special mention of it to his  
everlasting commendation: *I know Abraham*, says  
God, *that he will command his Children and his Hou-*  
*shold after him to keep the way of the Lord, and to do*  
*Justice and Judgment*, Gen. 18.19.

*Fifthly*, Consider yet further, the great Evils con-  
sequent upon this neglect. And they are manifold.  
But not to enlarge particularly upon them, they all

SERM. end in *this*, the final miscarriage and ruin of Chil-  
 LIIL dren. Do but leave depraved corrupt Nature to  
 its self, and it will take its own course, and the end  
 of it in all probability will be miserable.

If the generous Seeds of Religion and Virtue be not carefully sown in the tender Minds of Children, and those Seeds be not cultivated by good Education, there will certainly spring up *Briars* and *Thorns*, of which Parents will not only feel the inconveniences, but every body else that comes near them.

*Neglectis urenda filix innascitur Agris.*

If the Ground be not planted with something that is good, it will bring forth that which is either useless or hurtful, or both: For *Nature* is seldom barren, it will either bring forth *useful Plants*, or *Weeds*.

We are naturally inclined to Evil, and the neglect of Education puts Children upon a kind of necessity of becoming what they are naturally inclin'd to be. Do but let them alone, and they will soon be habituated to Sin and Vice. And when they are once accustomed to do evil, they have lost their Liberty and Choice: They are then hardly capable of good counsel and instruction: Or if they be patient to hear it, they have no power to follow it, being bound in the chains of their Sins, and *led captive by Satan at his pleasure*. And when they have brought themselves into this condition, their *Ruin* seems to be *sealed*, and without a Miracle of God's Grace they are never to be reclaimed.

Nor doth the mischief of this Neglect end here, but it extends it self to the *Publick*, and to *Posterity*. If we neglect the good Education of our Children, they will in all probability prove bad Men; and *these* will neglect their Children; and so the Foundation of an endless Mischief is laid; and our Posterity will

will be bad Members both of Church and Common-wealth. SERM.  
LIII.

If they be neglected in matter of *Instruction*, they will either be *ignorant* or *erroneous*: Either they will not mind Religion, or they will disturb the Church with new and wild Opinions: And I fear that the neglect of instructing and *Catechising* Youth, of which this Age hath been so grossly guilty, hath made it so fruitful of Errors, and strange Opinions.

But if besides *this*, no care be taken of their *Lives* and *Manners*, they will become burthens of the Earth, and Pests of human Society, and so much Poison and Infection let abroad into the World.

*Sixthly*, and *Lastly*, Parents should often consider that the neglect of this Duty will not only involve them in the *inconvenience*, and *shame*, and *sorrow*, of their Childrens miscarriage, but in a great measure in the *guilt* of it: They will have a great share in all the Evil they do, and be in some sort chargeable with all the Sins they commit. If the Children bring forth wild and sower Grapes, the Parents teeth will be set on edge.

The temporal Mischiefs and Inconveniences which come from the careless Education of Children as to *Credit*, *Health* and *Estate*, all which do usually suffer by the vicious and lewd courses of your Children; these methinks should awaken your *care* and *diligence*: But what is this to the *guilt* which will rebound to you upon their account? Part of all their wickedness will be put upon your score; and possibly the Sins which they commit many years after you are dead and gone, will follow you into the other World, and bring new fuel to Hell, to heat that Furnace hotter upon you.

However, this is certain, that *Parents* must one Day be accountable for all their neglects of their *Children*: And so likewise shall *Ministers* and *Masters*



SERM. of Families for their People and Servants, so far as  
 LIII. they had the Charge of them.

And what will Parents be able to say to God at the Day of Judgment for all their neglects of their Children, in matter of *Instruction*, and *Example*, and *Restraint* from evil? How will it make your ears to tingle, when God shall arise terribly to Judgment, and say to you, *Behold! the Children which I have given you; They were ignorant, and you instructed them not; They made themselves vile, and you restrained them not: Why did not you teach them at Home, and bring them to Church to the publick Ordinances and Worship of God, and train them up to the exercise of Piety and Devotion? But you did not only neglect to give them good Instruction, but you gave them bad Example: And lo! they have followed you to Hell, to be an addition to your Torment there.*

*Unnatural Wretches! that have thus neglected, and by your neglect destroyed those, whose Happiness by so many bonds of Duty and Affection you were obliged to procure: Behold! the Books are now open, and there is not one Prayer upon Record that ever you put up for your Children: There is no Memorial, no not so much as of one Hour that ever was seriously spent to train them up to a sense of God, and to the knowledge of their Duty: But on the contrary it appears, that you have many ways contrived their Misery, and contributed to their Ruin, and help'd forward their Damnation. How could you be thus unnatural? How could you thus hate your own Flesh, and hate your own Souls? How much better had it been for them, and how much better for you, that they had never been born?*

Would not such a heavy Charge as this make every joint of you to tremble? Will it not cut you to the heart, and pierce your very Souls to have your Children challenge you in that Day, and say to you one by one, *Had you been as careful to teach me the good knowledge of the Lord, as I was capable of learning it: Had you been but as forward to instruct me in*

my Duty, as I was ready to have hearken'd to it, it SERM.  
 had not been with me as it is at this Day: I had not |L.III.  
 now stood trembling here in a fearful expectation of the  
 eternal Doom which is just ready to be pass'd upon me.  
 Cursed be the Man that begat me, and the Paps that  
 gave me suck. 'Tis to you that I must in a great mea-  
 sure owe my everlasting undoing. Would it not strike  
 any of us with horror to be thus challenged and re-  
 proached by our Children in that great and terrible  
 Day of the Lord?

I am not able to make so dreadful a representation  
 of this matter as it deserves. But I would by all this,  
 if it be possible, awaken Parents to a sense of their  
 Duty, and terrify them out of this gross and shame-  
 ful neglect which so many are guilty of. For when  
 I seriously consider how supinely remiss and uncon-  
 cerned many Parents are as to the Religious Educa-  
 tion of their Children, I cannot but think of that  
 Saying of Augustus concerning Herod, *Better be his  
 Dog than his Child*: I think it was spoken to another  
 purpose, but it is true likewise to the purpose I am  
 speaking of: Better to be some Mens Dogs, or Hawks,  
 or Horses, than their Children: For they take a  
 greater care to breed and train up these to their seve-  
 ral ends and uses, than to breed up their Children for  
 eternal Happiness.

Upon all these accounts, *Train up a child in the way  
 he should go, that when he is old he may not depart from  
 it*: That neither your Children may be miserable  
 by your Fault, nor you by the neglect of so natural  
 and necessary a Duty towards them. God grant  
 that all that are concerned may lay these things se-  
 riously to heart, for his mercies sake in *Jesus Christ*;  
 To Whom, with Thee O Father, and the Holy Ghost,  
 be all Honour and Glory both now and ever. Amen.

# SERMON LIV.

Of the Advantages of an Early  
PIETY.

*Preached in the Church of St. Lawrence-  
Jury, in the Year 1662.*

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✕ ECCLES. xii. 1.

*Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy  
Youth ; while the evil days come not, nor the  
years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no  
pleasure in them.*

SERM.  
LIV.

**I**N the former Discourses, concerning the Education of Children, I have carried the Argument thro' the State of *Childhood* to the beginning of the next step of their Age which we call *Youth* ; when they come to exercise their Reason, and to be fit to take upon themselves the performance of that *Solemn Vow* which was made for them by their *Sureties* in *Baptism*.

To encourage them to set seriously and in good earnest about this Work, I shall now add another Discourse concerning the *Advantages of an Early Piety*. And to this purpose I have chosen for the foundation of it these Words of *Solomon*, in his Book called *Ecclesiastes*, or the *Preacher* : *Remember now*



thy Creator in the days of thy Youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them.

SERM.  
LIV.

It will not be necessary to give an account of the Context any further than to tell you, that this *Book* of the *Royal Preacher* is a lively description of the Vanity of the World in general and particularly of the Life of Man. This is the main Body of his *Sermon*, in which there are here and there scattered many serious Reflections upon our selves, and very weighty Considerations to quicken our preparations for our latter End, and to put us in mind of *the days of darkness which will be many*, as the *Preacher* tells us in the *Chapter* before the *Text*.

Among these is the Admonition and advice in the words of the *Text*: Which do indeed concern those that are *young*, but yet will afford useful matter of Meditation to persons of all Ages and Conditions whatsoever: Of great thankfulness to Almighty God from those who by the Grace of God, and his Blessing upon a pious Education, have entred upon a Religious course betimes: And of a deep Sorrow and Repentance to those who have neglected and let slip this best Opportunity of their Lives; and of taking up a firm Resolution of redeeming that loss, as much as is possible, by their future care and diligence: And to them more especially, who are grown old and have not yet begun this great and necessary Work, it will minister occasion to resolve upon a speedy retreat, and without any further delay to return to God and their Duty; lest the Opportunity of doing it, which is now almost quite spent, be lost for ever.

The *Text* contains a *Duty*, which is to *remember our Creator*; and a *Limitation* of it, more especially to one particular *Age* and time of our *Life*; in *the days of our Youth*: Not to exclude any other Age, but to lay a particular *Emphasis* and weight upon this: *Remember thy Creator in the days of thy Youth,*

SERM. *Youth*, that is, more especially in this Age of thy  
 LIV. Life: To intimate to us, both that this is the fittest  
 ~~~~~ Season, and that we cannot begin this Work too  
 soon.

And this is further illustrated by the opposition of it to *Old Age*: *When the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh of which thou shalt say I have no pleasure in them*: This is a Description of *Old Age*, the evils whereof are continually growing; and which in respect of the cares and griefs, the distempers and infirmities which usually attend it, is rather a burthen than a pleasure.

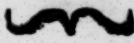
In the handling of these *Words*, I shall do these three things,

First, I shall consider the Nature of the *Act* or *Duty* here enjoyn'd, and that is to *remember God*.

Secondly, I shall consider what there is in the Notion of God as *Creator* which is more particularly apt to awaken and oblige us to the remembrance of Him.

Thirdly, I shall consider the *Limitation* of this Duty more especially to this particular Age of our Lives, *the days of our youth*: Why we should begin this Work then, and not put it off to the time of old Age.

I. I shall consider the nature of the *Act* or *Duty* here enjoyn'd, which is to *remember our Creator*. For the understanding of which *Expression* and others of the like nature in *Scripture*, it is to be consider'd, that it is very usual in *Scripture* to express *Religion* and the *whole Duty* of Man by some eminent *Act*, or *Principle*, or *Part* of *Religion*: Sometimes by the *Knowledge* of God, and by *Faith* in Him; and very frequently by the *Fear* and by the *Love* of God; because these are the great *Principles* and *Parts* of *Religion*: And so likewise, tho' not so frequently, *Religion* is express'd by the *Remembrance* of God: Now *Remembrance* is the actual thought of what we do habitually know. To remember God is to have him
 actually

actually in our minds, and upon all proper occasions SERM. LIV.
to revive the thoughts of Him, and as *David* expre-
seth it, to *set him always before us: I set the Lord*, says 
he, *always before me*, that is, God was continually
present to his mind and thoughts.

And in opposition to this we find wicked men in
Scripture described by the contrary quality, *forgetful-
ness* of God: So they are described in *Job*; *Job* 8.
13. *Such are the paths of them that forget God*, that
is, of the wicked: And the same description *David*
gives of them, *Psal.* 9. 17. *The wicked*, says he, *shall
be turned into Hell, and all the Nations that forget God*:
And elsewhere he gives the same character of a wick-
ed man, *Psal.* 10. 4. that *God is not in all his
thoughts*.

And the course of a religious Life is not unfitly
expres'd by our *Remembrance of God*. For to *remem-
ber* a Person or Thing is to call them to mind upon
all proper and fitting Occasions; to think actually
of them, so as to do that which the remembrance of
them does require or prompt us to. To remember a
Friend, is to be ready upon occasion to do him all
good offices: To remember a kindness and benefit,
is to be ready to acknowledge and requite it when
there is an opportunity: To remember an injury, is
to be ready to revenge it: And in a word to remem-
ber any thing is to be mindful to do that which the
memory of such a thing doth naturally suggest to us.

So that to *remember God*, is frequently and in our
most serious and retired thoughts to consider that
there is such a *Being* as *God* is; of all *Power* and *Per-
fection*, who made us and all other things, and hath
given us *Laws* to live by, suitable to our *Natures*;
and will call us to a strict account for our observance
or violation of them, and accordingly reward and
punish us; very often in this World, and to be sure
in the other.

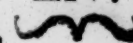
It is to revive often in our minds the thoughts of
God and of his infinite Perfections, and to live con-
tinually

SERM. continually under the power and awe of these apprehen-
 LIV. sions, that He is infinitely wise and good, holy and
 just; that He is always present with us, and observes
 what we do, and is intimate to our most secret
 thoughts, and *will bring every work into Judgment,*
and every secret thing whether it be good, or whether it
be evil; as the *Preacher* tells us in the conclusion of
 this *Sermon*.

The Duty then here required of us, is so soon as
 we arrive at the use of Reason and the exercise of
 our Understandings, to take God into consideration,
 and to begin a religious course of Life betimes;
 to consecrate the beginning of our Days and the
 flower and strength of them to his Service: Whilst
 our Mind is yet soft and tender, and in a great
 measure free from all other impressions, to be mind-
 ful of the *Being* that is above us; and in all our de-
 signs and actions to take God into consideration, and
 to do every thing in his Fear, and with an eye to
 his Glory. *Remember thy Creator*, that is, honour,
 fear, love, obey, and serve Him; and in a word, do e-
 very thing as becomes one that is mindful of God,
 and hath Him continually in his thoughts.

II. I shall in the next place consider, what there
 is in the Notion of God as our *Creator* that is more
 particularly apt to awaken and oblige men to the re-
 membrance of God. The *Text* does not barely re-
 quire us to *remember* God, but to remember Him as
 the Author and Founder of our Beings: *Remember*
thy Creator. And there is certainly some particular
Emphasis in it, so that God considered under the No-
 tion of our *Creator* is apt to strike us with a particular
 regard and awe of Him. And that upon a *threefold*
 account; as *Creation* is a sensible demonstration to
 us, 1st. Of the *Being*. 2^{dly}. Of the *Power*, and 3^{dly}.
 Of the *Goodness* of God.

First, Of His *Being*. The *Creation* is of all other
 the most sensible and obvious Argument of a Deity.
 Other Considerations may work upon our Reason
 and

and Understanding, but this doth as it were bring SERM.
 God down to our senses. So often as we look up to LIV.
 Heaven, or down upon the Earth; upon ourselves, 
 or into ourselves; upon the things without us, and
 round about us; Which way soever we turn our
 eyes, we are encounter'd with plain evidences of a
superior Being, which made us and all other things:
 Every thing which we behold with our Eyes doth in
 some way or other represent God to us and bring him
 to our minds, so as we cannot avoid the sight of
 Him if we would. So the *Psalmist* tells us, *Psal.* 19.
 1. *The Heavens declare the glory of God, and the Fir-*
manent shews the work of his hands. And so likewise
 St. Paul, Rom. i. 20. *The invisible things of Him,*
from the Creation of the World, are clearly seen being
understood by the things which are made; even his e-
ternal Power and Godhead.

Secondly, As the *Creation* is a demonstration of
 God's infinite *Power*. And this Consideration is apt
 to work upon our *Fear*, the most wakeful Passion of
 all other in the Soul of Man: Insomuch that the *A-*
theist would fain ascribe the Original apprehension
 and belief of a Deity to the natural Fears of Men;
Primus in orbe Deos fecit timor, Fear first made Gods;
 and by this means would fain persuade us that it is so
 far from being true that God is our *Creator*, that
 He is merely the *Creature* of our own vain *Fear* and
Imagination.

But surely this is very unreasonable. For if there
 be a God that made us, there is infinite reason why
 we should stand in awe of Him, and have him al-
 ways in our mind and thoughts; because He who
 made us and all other things, if we neglect Him
 and forget so great a Benefactor, can as easily make
 us miserable, or turn us out of Being. Therefore
remember thy Creator, and despise or forget Him at
 thy utmost peril.

Thirdly, As the *Creation* is a demonstration of the
Goodness of God to his Creatures. This Considera-
 tion

SERM. tion of God as our *Creator* doth naturally suggest to
 LIV. our minds, that his Goodness brought us into Being;
 and that if Being be a Benefit, God is the Fountain
 and Author of it, that his Goodness called us out of
 nothing, and made us to be what we are; for *of his
 good pleasure we are and were created.* He was under
 no necessity of doing it; for He was from eternal
 Ages happy in himself before we were, and would
 have been so to all eternity though we had never
 been; nor was it possible He could be under any ob-
 ligation to us before we were.

And He is not only our *Creator* as he gave us our
 Beings at first, but likewise as we are preserved and
 continued in Life by the same Goodness which first
 gave us Life and Breath; for *of his Goodness we Are
 as well as were created.*

And can we forget so great a Benefactor, and be
unmindful of the God that formed us? Can we chuse
 but remember the Founder of our Beings, the great
 Patron and Preserver of our Lives? And so soon as
 we arrive at the use of Reason, and discover this
 great Benefactor to whom we owe our Lives and all the
 Blessings of them, can we forbear to do homage to him,
 and to say with *David, O come, let us worship and
 fall down and kneel before the Lord our Maker: For
 He is the Lord our God, it is He that hath made us
 and not we ourselves; we are his People, and the Sheep
 of his pasture.* I proceed to consider in the

III. and last place, The Reason of the *Limitation*
 of this Duty more especially to this particular *Age* of
 our Lives, *Remember now thy Creator in the days of
 thy Youth, when the evil days come not, nor the years
 draw nigh when thou shalt say I have no pleasure in
 them: Now; in the days of thy Youth; by which So-
 lomon plainly designs two things.*

First, to engage young persons to begin this great
 and necessary Work of Religion betimes, and as soon as
 ever they are capable of taking it into consideration,
Remember thy Creator in the days of thy Youth. And
 the

the Son of *Sirach* much to the same purpose, speaking of one that in good earnest applies his heart to Wisdom, describes him in this manner, *Ecclus. He will give his heart to resort early to the Lord that made him; which is the same with the expression in the Text, of remembering our Creator in the days of our Youth.* SERM.
LIV.

Secondly, To engage young persons to set about this Work *presently*, and not to defer it and put it off to the future, as most are apt to do; *Remember Now, thy Creator in the days of thy youth:* Especially, not to adjourn it to the most unfit and improper time of all other, to the time of infirmity and old Age, *Now in the days of thy Youth; when the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh when thou shalt say I have no pleasure in them: While the Sun, or the Light, or the Moon, or the Stars be not darken'd, &c.*

And how much reason there is to press both these Considerations upon young persons I shall endeavour to shew in the following Particulars.

First, Because in this Age of our Lives we have the greatest and most sensible obligation to *remember God our Creator: In the days of our youth*, when the Blessing and benefit of Life is new, and the memory of it fresh upon our minds. It ought not indeed to be so, but we find it true which *Seneca* says, *Nil citius senescit quàm gratia, Nothing sooner grows old and out of date than obligation;* and we are but too apt to forget what we have the greatest reason to remember.

In this Age of our Life, when we begin to come to the free use and exercise of our Reason, the first thing we are instructed in, and if we were not taught it we should, tho' perhaps more slowly, discover and find it out of our selves: I say, the first thing we are instructed in and inquisitive about is the *Author* of our Beings, and how we came into the World: And when God first appears to our Minds, and we come by degrees clearly to understand by whose Bounty and Blessing it is that we are and have been

SERM. been preserved thus long, without our own care;
 LIV. principally by the Providence of God, and under
 ~~~~~ Him by those instruments which He hath raised and  
 preserved for that purpose: When we consider this,  
 we cannot but be strangely surprized both with the  
 Novelty of the Benefit and the Greatness of it.

And when we have well viewed our selves, and  
 look'd about us, upon the Creatures below us, all of  
 them subject to our Dominion and use: And when  
 we consider seriously in what a noble Rank and order  
 of Creatures we are placed; and how fearfully and  
 wonderfully we are made, not groveling upon the  
 earth or bowed down to it, but of a beautiful and up-  
 right shape of Body, and such a Majesty of Counte-  
 nance as if we were all kings of the Creation: And  
 which is much more excellent than this, that we are  
 endued with Minds and Understandings, with Reason  
 and Speech, whereby we are capable not only of con-  
 versing with and benefiting one another, but also of  
 the knowledge and friendship and enjoyment of the  
 best and most perfect of Beings, God himself: I say  
 when we first consider this and meditate seriously up-  
 on it, can we possibly ever after forget God? shall  
 we not naturally break out into that enquiry which  
*Elibu* thinks so proper for Man that he wonders it is  
 not in every Man's mouth, *Where is God my Maker,*  
*who teacheth me more than the Beasts of the Earth,*  
*and maketh me wiser than the Fowls of Heaven?* Job  
 35. 10, 11.

So that there is a very special obligation upon us to  
 be mindful of God in this Age of our Lives, when  
 we first come to the knowledge of Him, and when  
 the sense of his Favours is fresh and new to us; and  
 not only so, but when the Blessing of Life is at the  
 very best and in its verdure and flower; when our  
 Health is in its strength and vigor, and the pleasures  
 and enjoyments of Life have their full taste and per-  
 fect relish. So *Job* describes the days of his youth,  
 Job

Job 29. 2, 3, 4. O that I were as in months past, SERM. LIV.  
as in the days when God preserved me; when his Can-  
dle shined upon my Head, and when by his light I  
walked through darkness, as I was in the days of my  
youth, &c.

Indeed when the evil days are once come, and thou art enter'd upon the years in which thou thy self hast no pleasure, there might be some sort of pretence then to forget God; because then Life begins to wither and decay, and not only the gloss and beauty but even the comfort and sweetness of it is gone, and it becomes an insipid and tasteless thing; But thou art inexcusable, O Man, whoever thou art, if thou art unmindful of God in the best Age of thy Life, and when the sense of his Benefits ought upon all accounts to make the strongest and deepest impressions upon thy Mind.

Secondly, The Reason will be yet stronger to put us upon this, if we consider that notwithstanding the great obligation which lies upon us to remember our Creator in the days of our youth, we are most apt at that time of all other to forget Him. For that which is the great Blessing of Youth is also the great Danger of it, I mean the Health and Prosperity of it; and though men have then least reason, yet they are most apt to forget God in the height of pleasure and in the abundance of all things.

Youth is extreamly addicted to pleasure, because it is most capable and most sensible of it; and where we are most apt to be transported, there we are most apt to transgress. Nothing does so besot the Mind and extinguish in it all sense of Divine things as sensual pleasures. If we fall in love with them, they will take off our thoughts from Religion and steal away our hearts from God. For no man can serve two Masters; and the carnal mind is enmity against God.

Besides that Youth is rash and inconsiderate, because unexperienced; and consequently not apt to be



SERM. be cautious and prudent, no not as to the future con-  
 LIV. cernments of this temporal Life ; much less of that  
 which seems to be at so much a greater distance, and  
 for that reason is so very seldom in our thoughts.

*Thirdly*, Because this Age is of all other the fittest and best to begin a Religious course of Life. And this does not contradict the former Argument, tho' it seems to do so. For as it is true of Children, that they are most prone to be idle and yet fittest to learn ; so in the case we are speaking of, both are true, that youth is an Age wherein we are too apt, if left to ourselves, to forget God and Religion, and yet at the same time fittest to receive the impressions of it.

Youth is *ætas Disciplinæ*, the proper Age of Discipline ; very obsequious and tractable, fit to receive any kind of impression and to imbibe any tincture : Now we should lay hold of this golden Opportunity. This Age of suppleness, and obedience, and patience for labour, should be plyed by Parents, before that rigour and stiffness which grows with years comes on too fast. Childhood and Youth are choice Seasons for the planting of Religion and Virtue, and if Parents and Teachers sleep in this Seed time they are ill Husbandmen ; for this is *the time of plowing and sowing*.

This Age is certainly the most proper for Instruction, according to that of the Prophet, Isa. 28. 9. *Whom shall he teach knowledge ? Whom shall he make to understand Doctrine ? Them that are weaned from the milk and drawn from the breast. For precept must be upon precept, and line upon line, here a little and there a little.* And the sooner this is done, the better ; only things must be instilled into them gently and by degrees.

It is a noted Saying of Aristotle, *That young Persons are not fit to hear Lectures of Moral Philosophy* ; because at that Age Passion is so predominant and unruly : By which, I think, he only means that the Minds

Minds of young Persons are least prepared to receive SERM.  
the Precepts of Morality and to submit to them; but LIV.  
that he does not hereby intend, that therefore no  
care ought to be used to form the Minds and Man-  
ners of Youth to Virtue and Goodness. He certainly  
understood the nature and power of evil Habits  
too well to be of that mind; and consequently must  
think that the Principles of Morality ought with  
great care and diligence to be instill'd into young  
persons betimes: Because they of all other have the  
most need of this kind of Instruction, and this Age  
is the most proper Season for it: And the less their  
Minds are prepared for it, so much the more pains  
ought to be taken with them, that they may be  
taught to govern and subdue their Passions before  
they grow too stiff and headstrong. So that if the  
Seeds of Religion and Virtue be not planted in our  
younger years, what is to be expected in old Age?  
according to that of the Son of Sirach, Ecclus. 25.  
13. *If thou hast gathered nothing in thy Youth, how  
canst thou expect to find any thing in thine Age?*

Young years are tender and easily wrought upon,  
apt to be moulded into any fashion, they are *udum*  
& *molle lutum*, like *moist and soft clay* which is pliable  
to any form; but soon grows hard, and then no-  
thing is to be made of it. It is a very difficult  
thing to make impressions upon Age, and to deface  
the Evils which hath been deeply imprinted upon  
young and tender minds. When good instruction  
hath been neglected at first, a conceited Ignorance  
doth commonly take possession, and obstruct all the  
passages through which Knowledge and Wisdom  
should enter into us.

Upon this Consideration the Work of Religion  
should be begun betimes, because it is a mighty ad-  
vantage to any thing to be planted in a ground that  
is newly broken up. It is just the same thing for  
young persons to be enter'd into a Religious course  
and to have their Minds habituated to Virtue before  
they are become

SERM. vicious Customs have got place and strength in us:  
 LIV. For whoever shall attempt this afterwards will meet  
 with infinite difficulty and opposition, and must dis-  
 pute his ground by inches.

It is good therefore to do that which must be done one time or other, when it is easiest to be done; when we may do it with the greatest advantage, and are likely to meet with the least and weakest opposition. We should anticipate Vice, and prevent the Devil and the World, by letting God into our hearts betimes and giving Religion the first *seizure* and possession of our Souls. This is the time of sowing our Seed, which must by no means be neglected. For the Soul will not lye fallow; good or evil will come up. If our minds be not cultivated by Religion, Sin and Vice will get the possession of them: But if our tender years be seasoned with the knowledge and fear of God, this in all probability will have a good influence upon the following course of our Lives.

In a word, this Age of our Lives is proper for Labour and Conflict; because Youth is full of heat and vigor, of courage and resolution to enterprize and effect difficult things.

This heat indeed renders young persons very unfit to advise and direct themselves, and therefore they have need to be advised and directed by those who are wiser and more experienced: But yet this heat makes them very fit for practice and action; for though they are bad at counsel, they are admirable at execution, when their heat is well directed; they have a great deal of vivacity and quickness, of courage and constancy in the way wherein they are set.

Besides, that Youth hath a great sense of Honour and Virtue, of Praise and Commendation, which are of great force to engage young persons to attempt worthy and excellent things: For hope and confidence, strength and courage, with which sense of Honour and desire of Praise are apt to inspire them,



them, are admirable instruments of Victory and SERM.  
Mastery in any kind ; and these are proper and most LIV.  
peculiar to Youth, *I write unto you young men, saith*  
*St. John, because ye are strong, and have overcome the*  
*evil One.*

And, besides the spirit and vigor of Youth, young persons have several other qualities which make them very capable of learning any thing that is good. They are apt to believe, because they have not been often deceived ; and this is a very good quality in a Learner. And they are full of hopes, which will encourage them to attempt things even beyond their strength ; because Hope is always of the future, and the Life of young persons is in a great measure before them and yet to come. And, which is a good Bridle to restrain them from that which is evil, they are commonly very modest and bashful ; And which is also a singular advantage, they are more apt to do that which is honest and commendable than that which is gainful and profitable, being in a great measure free from the *love of Money*, which *Experience*, as well as the *Apostle*, tells us, *is the root of all Evil*. Children are very seldom covetous, because they have seldom been bitten by want.

*Fourthly*, This is the most acceptable Time of all other, because it is the first of our Age. Under the *Law the first fruits* and the *first-born* were God's. In like manner we should devote the *first* of our Age and Time to Him. God is the first and most excellent of Beings, and therefore it is fit that the prime of our Age and the excellency of our strength should be dedicated to Him and his Service.

An early Piety must needs be very acceptable and pleasing to God. Our *Blessed Lord* took great pleasure to see *little Children come unto Him* ; an Emblem of the pleasure he takes that Men should lift themselves betimes in his Service. *St. John* was the

SERM. youngest of all the *Disciples*, and our *Saviour* had a  
 LIV. very particular kindness and affection for him; for  
 he is said to be *the Disciple whom Jesus loved*.

It is a good sign that we value God as we ought, and have a true esteem for his Service, when we can find in our hearts to give him our *good Days*, and *the years* which we our selves *have pleasure in*: And that we have a grateful sense of his benefits and of our mighty obligation to him, when we make the quickest and best returns we can, and think nothing too good to render to *Him* from whom we have received all.

It is likewise an argument of great Sincerity which is the Soul of all Religion and virtue, when a Man devotes himself to God betimes: Because it is a good evidence that he is not drawn by those forcible constraints, or driven to God by that pressing necessity which lies upon Men in time of *Sickness* and *old Age*. And on the contrary, it cannot but be very displeasing to God to be neglected by us when we are in the flower and vigor of our Age: When our Blood is warm, and our Spirits quick, and our Parts are at the best, *then* to think our selves too good to serve God; what an affront is this to Him who hath deserved so infinitely well of us, and beyond the best and utmost that we can possibly do?

Besides, that there is a peculiar kind of grace and loveliness in the worthy and excellent actions of Young Persons, great things being hardly expected from them at that Age. Early Habits of Virtue, like new Cloaths upon a young and comely Body, sit very gracefully upon a straight and well shap'd Mind, and do mightily become it.

As there is Joy in Heaven at the conversion of a great and old Sinner, so it cannot but be a very delightful Spectacle to God and Angels, and to the Spirits of just Men made perfect, to see a Young Person besieged by

by powerful Temptations on every side, to acquit SERM. LIV.  
 himself gloriously, and resolutely to hold out against the most violent Assaults : To behold one, in the pride and flower of his Age, that is courted by Pleasures and Honours, by the Devil and all the bewitching Vanities of this World, to reject all these and to cleave stedfastly to God : Nay, to frown upon all these Temptations and to look down upon them with indignation and scorn, and to say, Let those dote upon these things, who know no better : Let them adore sensual Pleasure and lying Vanities, who are ignorant of the sincere and solid Pleasures of Religion and Virtue : Let them run into the arms of Temptation who can forget God their *Creator*, their *Preserver*, and *the Guide of their Youth* : As for me, I will serve the Lord, and will employ my whole time either innocently or usefully, in serving God, and in doing good to Men who are made after the Image of God. This work shall take up my whole Life, there shall be no void or empty Space in it ; I will endeavour, as much as possibly I can, that there may be no gap or breach in it for the Devil and his Temptations to enter in : Lord, I will be thine, I have chosen thee for my happiness and *my portion for ever* : *Whom have I in Heaven but thee ? And there is none upon Earth that I desire besides thee. Lo ! They that are far from thee shall perish : But it is good for me to draw near to God*, to begin and end my Days in his fear and to his glory.

*Fifthly*, and *Lastly*, This Age of our Life may, for any thing we know, be the only Time we may have for this purpose ; and if we cast off the thoughts of God and defer the business of Religion to old Age, intending, as we pretend, to set about it at that Time, we may be cut off before that Time comes, and *turned into Hell with the People that forget God*.

The Work of Religion is the most necessary of all other, and must be done one time or other, or



SERM.

LIV.

we are certainly undone for ever. We cannot begin it too soon, but we easily delay it too long; and then we are miserable past all recovery. He that would not venture his immortal Soul, and put his everlasting Happiness upon the greatest hazard and uncertainty, must make Religion his first business and care, must think of God betimes and *remember his Creator in the days of his Youth.*

I have now done with the *three* things which I proposed to consider from these Words. The *Inferences* from this whole *Discourse* shall be these *two*,

*First*, To persuade those that are young to *remember God their Creator*, and to engage in the ways of Religion and Virtue betimes.

*Secondly*, To urge those who have neglected this first and best Opportunity of their Lives, to repent quickly and return to a better mind; lest the Opportunity be lost for ever, and their case become desperate and past remedy.

*First*, To persuade those that are young to *remember God their Creator* betimes, and to engage early in the ways of Religion and Virtue. Do not suffer your selves to be cheated and bewitched by sensual satisfactions, and to be destroyed by ease and prosperity. Let not a perpetual tenor of Health and Pleasure soften and dissolve the Spirits, and banish all wise and serious thoughts out of your Minds. Be not so foolish and unworthy, as to think that you have a privilege to forget God when he is most mindful of you; *when the Candle of the Lord shines about your Tabernacle*, and you are enjoying the health, and strength, and sweetness of Life.

No man knows what he does, and what an invaluable Treasure he prodigally wastes, when he lets slip this golden Season and Opportunity of his Life; whilst he is yet innocent and untainted with Sin and Vice, and his Mind is clear of all bad impressions

and

and capable of the best; not enslaved to evil, and at liberty to do well. SERM.  
LIV.

Consider, that the ways of Religion and Virtue are nothing so difficult and unpleasant now, as they will be hereafter: And that the longer you forget God, and the more you are estranged from Him, the more unwilling you will be to think of him and to return to him: That your Lusts will every day gain more strength, and your Hearts by degrees will contract such a stiffness and hardness that it will be no easy matter to work upon them.

Therefore *remember your Creator in the days of your youth: To day, whilst it is called to day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of Sin.* When will you think of beginning a good course, if not now? You have a great Work before you which cannot be done in a little time, which cannot be begun and finish'd at once. Your whole Life is no more than sufficient for it; to do it to the best advantage, and as it ought to be done. Do not then think of crowding it into a corner of your Life, much less of putting it off to the very end of it: When *that night comes, no man can work.*

Consider further; if we will deny God the hearty and vigorous service of our best days, how can we expect that he will accept the faint and flattering Devotions of old Age? Wise men are wont to forecast and provide some stay and comfort for themselves against the evils and infirmities of that Time; that they may have something to lean upon in their weakness, something to mitigate and allay the troubles and afflictions of that dark and gloomy Evening: That what they cannot enjoy of present pleasure and satisfaction may in some measure be made up to them in comfortable reflections upon the past actions of a holy and innocent, an useful and well spent Life.

But on the other hand, if we have neglected Religion, and forgotten God days without number; if we have lived an ungodly and vicious Life, we

SERM. have treasured up so much guilt and remorse, so

LIV. many aggravations of our sorrow and anguish against  
 an evil Day; and have foolishly contrived to make  
 our burthen then heaviest, when we are least able to  
 stand under it; and have provided and laid in infinite  
 matter for Repentance, when there is hardly any  
 space and opportunity left for the exercise of it; and  
 when we shall be utterly dishearten'd from setting a-  
 bout so vast a Work, of which we can see no end;  
 and yet have so very little time for it, that if we do any  
 thing at all in it we shall be forced to huddle it up  
 in so much haste and confusion, as will, I doubt,  
 signify but very little either to our present comfort,  
 or our future happiness.

Consider this in time, all ye that forget God in  
 the Day of your prosperity and in the best Age of  
 your Life, and yet when the Day of affliction and  
 the infirmities of Age come upon you would be glad  
 then to have God mindful of you, and merciful to  
 you. But if thou wouldst not have Him *cast thee off  
 in thine old Age and forsake thee when thy strength  
 fails*, do thou remember him in the days of thy youth,  
 in the prime and vigor of thine Age: *For this is  
 the acceptable Time, this is the Day of Salvation.*

Therefore acquaint thy self with Him, and remem-  
 ber him Now; *in the days of thy Youth*; defer not so  
 necessary a Work, no not for one moment: Begin it  
 just now, that so thou mayest have made some good  
 progress in it before *the evil days come*; before *the Sun,  
 and the Moon, and the Stars be darkened*, and all the  
 comforts and joys of Life be fled and gone.

Be not deceived, O man, whosoever thou art;  
 for *God is not mock'd*. He will not be put off by us  
*with the Days in which we our selves have no pleasure*.  
 Offer up thy self a living Sacrifice and not a Carcase,  
 if thou wouldst be accepted. Do not provoke and  
 affront the living God by offering up to him faint  
 spirits and feeble hands, and dim eyes, and a dead  
 heart.



heart. He hath been bountiful to us in giving us the SERM. best Blessings of Life, and all things richly to enjoy ; LIV. and do we grudge him the most valuable part of our Lives, and *the years which we our selves have pleasure in? Do we thus requite the Lord? foolish people and unwise!* Is the Giver of all good things unworthy to receive from us any thing that is good? *If we offer up the lame in Sacrifice, is it not evil? and if we offer up the blind, is it not evil? Offer it now to thy Governor, and try if he will be pleased with thee and accept thy person.* Hath God deserved so ill at our hands, that we should forget and neglect Him? And hath the Devil deserved so well of us, that we should be contented to spend the best part of our Lives in his Service, which is perfect Slavery? Was he our Creator, or can he make us happy? Nay, does he not carry on a most malicious design to make us for ever miserable?

*Secondly,* Let me urge those who have neglected this first and best Opportunity of their Lives to repent quickly and return to a better mind, lest all Opportunity of doing it be lost for ever, and their case become desperate and past remedy. Resolve to redeem, if it be possible, the time which you should have improved: You have squander'd away too much already, waste no more of this precious Opportunity of Life: You have deferr'd a necessary Work too long, delay it no longer. Do not delude your selves with vain hopes that this Work may be done at any time, and in an instant; and that if you can but fashion your last breath into *Lord have mercy upon me,* this will prevail with God and make atonement for the long course of a wicked and sinful Life. What strange thoughts have men of God and Heaven, what extravagant conceits of the little evil of Sin and the great easiness of Repentance, that can impose upon themselves at this rate?

Bethink your selves better in time, *consider and shew your selves men.* What will you do in the day of your

SERM. your distress, who have neglected God in your most  
 LIV. flourishing and prosperous condition? What will you  
 say to Him in a dying hour, who scarce ever had one  
 serious thought of him all your Life? Can you have  
 the face at that time to bespeak him in this manner?  
 Lord, now the World and my Lusts have left me,  
 and I feel my self ready to sink into eternal perdition,  
 I lay hold upon thy Mercy to deliver my Soul  
 from going down into the Pit. I have heard strange  
 things of thy goodness, and that thou art merciful even  
 to a miracle. This is that which I always trusted  
 to, that after a long life of Sin and Vanity thou  
 wouldst at last be pacified with a few penitent words  
 and sighs at the hour of Death. Let me not, I pray  
 thee, be disappointed of this hope and put to confusion.

Is this an address fit to be made to a wise man,  
 much less to the all-wise and just Judge of the World?  
 and yet this seems to be the plain interpretation of  
 the late and forc'd application of a great and habitual  
 Sinner to almighty God in his last extremity,  
 and when he is just giving up the ghost and going to  
 appear before his dreadful Tribunal.

I say again, let no man deceive you with vain  
 words, or with vain hopes, or with false notions of  
 a slight and sudden repentance: As if Heaven were  
 an Hospital founded on purpose to receive all sick  
 and maimed persons, that when they can live no  
 longer to the Lusts of the Flesh and the sinful Pleasures  
 of this World can but put up a cold and formal  
 Petition to be admitted there.

No, no, as sure as God is true, they shall never  
 see the Kingdom of God, who instead of seeking it  
 in the first place make it their last Refuge and Retreat:  
 And when they find themselves under the Sentence of  
 Death and Damnation, only to avoid present Execution,  
 and since there is no other remedy, do at last bethink  
 themselves of getting to *Heaven*, and fall upon their  
 knees to petition the *Great Judge of the World* that they  
 may be transported thither.

Can

Can any Man in Reason expect that such a SERM.  
 Petition will be granted? I tell you Nay; but LIV.  
 except you repent sooner, at a fitter Time, and  
 after a better Fashion, you shall certainly perish.  
 As much as God desires the Salvation of Men,  
 he will not prostitute Heaven, and set the Gates of  
 it wide open to those who only fly to it in ex-  
 tremity, but never fought it in good earnest, nor  
 indeed do now care for it or desire it for any other  
 Reason, but to excuse them from going to Hell.  
 They have no value for Heaven because they are no  
 wise fit for it, but yet they think Hell to be the worse  
 Place of the two.

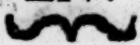
The ever blessed God is himself abundantly  
 sufficient for his own Happiness, and does not need  
 our company to make any addition to it: Nor yet  
 is Heaven so desolate a Place, or so utterly void of  
 Inhabitants, that like some newly discovered *Plan-*  
*tation* it should be glad to receive the most vile  
 and profligate persons, the Scum and Refuse of  
 Mankind. There are an innumerable Company  
 of glorious Angels, much nobler Creatures than the  
 best of Men, to people those blessed Regions.  
*Thousands of thousands continually stand before God,*  
*and ten thousand times ten Thousands minister unto*  
*Him.*

We do absolutely stand in need of God to make  
 us happy, but He hath no need of us to help him to  
 be so. God indeed is so good, as to desire our Hap-  
 piness as earnestly as if it were necessary to his own:  
 But he is happy in and from himself, and without  
 Him it is impossible we should be happy, nay, we  
 must of necessity be for ever miserable.

To conclude; if we would have God to accept us  
 in a dying hour, and our *Blessed Saviour to remember*  
*us now he is in his Kingdom,* let us think of him be-  
 times, and *acquaint our selves with him that we may*  
*be at peace: Now; before the evil days come, and the*  
*years*



SERM. *years draw nigh when we shall say we have no pleasure*  
LIV. *in them.*

 O that men were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end. Which God of his infinite Goodness grant that we may all seriously lay to heart, in this our Day; and may learn sometimes so to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom: For his mercies sake in Jesus Christ, to whom with the Father and the Holy Ghost, be all Honour and Glory, now and for ever. Amen.

I AP 57

T H E

Vol

THE  
R U L E  
O F  
F A I T H.  
O R, A N  
A N S W E R  
T O T H E  
TREATISE of Mr. I. S.  
E N T I T L E D,  
*SURE-FOOTING, &c.*

---

By his Grace *JOHN* late Lord Archbishop  
of *CANTERBURY*.

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T O M Y

Honoured and Learned F R I E N D

*Dr.* S T I L L I N G F L E E T.

S I R,

I Have, with a great deal of Pleasure and Satisfaction, read over your *Book*, which I find in every Part answerable to its *Title*, viz. *A Rational Account of the Grounds of the Protestant Religion*. And now I thank you for it, not only as a private Favour, but a publick Benefit. No sooner had I perused it, but I met with a *Discourse* entitled, *Sure-footing in Christianity*. And although I have no small Prejudice against Books with conceited Titles, yet I was tempted to look into this, because it pretended to contain *Animadversions on some Passages* in your *Book*, which I had so lately read over. Upon Perusal of which *Animadversions*, I found that the Author of them had attack'd (and in his own Opinion confuted) a Page or Two in your *Book*. This drew me on to take a View of his main *Discourses* : Which because they are in great Vogue among some of his own

I 2 party,

Party, and do with an unusual kind of Confidence and Ostentation pretend to the newest and most exact *Fashion* of writing *Controversy*, as being all along *demonstrative* and built upon *self-evident Principles*; Therefore I resolv'd thoroughly to examine them, that I might discover (if I could) upon what so firm and solid Foundations this *High* and *Mighty* Confidence was built.

But before I had enter'd upon this Undertaking, I met with a *Letter* from the Author of *Sure-footing* to his *Answerer*, directing him how he ought to demean himself in his Answer. In which *Letter*, though there be many Things liable to great Exception, yet because I am unwilling to be diverted from the main *Question*, I shall not argue with him about any of those Matters; only take leave to use the same Liberty in managing my Answer, which he hath assumed to himself in prescribing Laws to me about it: Therefore, without taking any further Notice of his *Letter*, I address my self to his *Book*.

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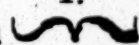
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P A R T I.

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*The Explication and State of the Question.*

SECT. I. *The Explication of the Terms of the Question.*

§. I. **T**HE Question he propounds to him-<sup>PART.</sup> self to debate, is, *What is the Rule I. of Faith?* in order to the Resolution  whereof he endeavours,

*First*, To fix the true notion of these Two Terms, *Rule* and *Faith*: Which way of proceeding I cannot but allow to be very proper and reasonable, but I can by no Means think his explication of those Terms to be sufficient. He tells us, That *a Rule is that which is able to regulate or guide him that useth it*: In which Description, as in many other Passages of his Book, he is plainly guilty of that which he taxeth in Mr. *Whitby*, that is, the confounding of a *Rule* <sup>p. 180</sup> and a *Guide*, by making *Regulating* and *Guiding* to be equivalent Words. But for this I am no further concerned than to take Notice of it by the Way: The Fault which I find in this *Definition*, is, That it doth not make the Thing plainer than it was before; so that no Man is the wiser for it, nor one Jot



PART. nearer knowing what a *Rule* is. He pretends to tell  
 I. *Englishmen* what a *Rule* is, and for their clearer understanding of this *Word*, he explains it by a *Word* less remov'd from the *Latin*, *A Rule is that which is able to regulate him that useth it*; just as if a Man should go about to explain what a *Lawgiver* is, by saying, *he is one that hath the Power of Legislation*. Of the two he had much better have said, That a *Rule is a thing that is able to rule him that useth it*, though this be nothing but an Explication of the same *Word* by it self.

§. 2. Not much better is his Explication of the Term *Faith*, which he tells us, *in the common Sense of Mankind, is the same with Believing*.<sup>b</sup> He declar'd indeed before-hand, That he did not intend to give rigorous *School-Definitions* of either this or the former *Word*; and (to do him Right) he hath not in the least swerv'd from his Intention. It were to be wish'd he had prefac'd some such Thing to his *Demonstrations*, for the Reader will find that they are not a whit more rigorous than his *Definitions*; the Latter of which doth very much resemble the Countryman's Way of defining, who being ask'd by his Neighbour what an *Invasion* was, after some Study told him very gravely, That an *Invasion* was as if he should say an *Invasion*. In like manner Mr. S. tells us, That *Faith* (or, which is all one, *Belief*) is the same with *Believing*; which in my Apprehension, is but a Country Definition, unless the interposing of those solemn Words (*In the common Sense of Mankind*) may be thought to mend the Matter. This puts me in mind  
<sup>c</sup> p. 159 of what Mr. S. says in his \* *Transition* (as he calls it) where he gives the Reader an Account what Feats he hath done in his Book: *He will see* (says he) *I take my Rise at the Meaning of the Words Rule and Faith; this known, I establish my First Principles in this present Matter to be these, viz. a Rule is a Rule, Faith is Faith*. This is the right self-evident Method he talks so much of, and his *Principles* agree admirably well with

with his *Definitions*. If he had but proceeded in the same Method, and added That a *Rule of Faith* is a *Rule of Faith*, that *Oral Tradition* is *Oral Tradition*, and that to say *Oral Tradition is the Rule of Faith*, is as much as to say *Oral Tradition is the Rule of Faith*, the whole business had been concluded without any more ado, and I think no body would have gone about to confute him.

§. 3. Rejecting then his Way of Definition as inept and frivolous, and no ways tending to give a man a clearer Notion of things; I shall endeavour to explain a little better (if I can) the meaning of these Terms.

A *Rule* (when we speak of a *Rule of Faith*) is a Metaphorical Word, which in its first and proper Sense, being applied to *material* and *sensible* Things, is the *Measure* according to which we judge of the Straightness and Crookedness of things; and from hence it is transferr'd by Analogy to Things *Moral* or *Intellectual*. A *moral Rule* is the *Measure* according to which we judge whether a thing be *Good* or *Evil*; and this kind of Rule is that which is commonly called a *Law*, and the Agreement or Disagreement of our Actions to this Rule, is suitable to the Metaphor, called *Rectitude* or *Obliquity*. An *Intellectual Rule* is the *Measure* according to which we judge whether a Thing be *True* or *False*; and this is either *General* or more *Particular*. Common Notions, and the acknowledged Principles of Reason, are that *General Rule*, according to which we judge whether a Thing be *True* or *False*. The particular Principles of every Science are the more *particular Rules*, according to which we judge whether things in that Science be *True* or *False*. So that the *General Notion* of a *Rule* is, That it is a *Measure*, by the Agreement or Disagreement to which, we judge of all Things of that kind to which it belongs.

§. 4. *Faith*, though both among sacred and prophane Writers it be used many times more generally, for

PART a persuasion or assent of the Mind to any Thing wrought in us by any kind of Argument; yet as it is I. a Term of Art used by *Divines*, it signifies that particular kind of Assent which is wrought in us by *Testimony* or *Authority*: So that *Divine Faith*, which we are now speaking of, is an assent to a thing upon the Testimony or Authority of God; or which is all one, an *Assent to a truth upon Divine Revelation*.

§. 5. A *Rule of Faith* is the *Measure* according to which we judge what Matters we are to assent to, as reveal'd to us by God, and what not. And more particularly, *The Rule of Christian Faith* is the Measure, according to which we are to judge what we ought to assent to, as the Doctrine reveal'd by *Christ* to the World, and what not.

§. 6. So that this Question, *What is the Rule of Christian Faith?* suppoeth a Doctrine revealed by Christ to the World; and that That Doctrine was intelligibly and entirely delivered by Christ to his Apostles, and sufficient Confirmation given to it; that this Doctrine was in the same Manner published to the World by the Apostles, who likewise gave sufficient evidence of the Truth of it. All this is necessarily supposed in the Question: For it would be in vain to enquire whether this or that be the Rule of Christian Faith, if such a thing as the Christian Faith were not first supposed. When therefore we enquire what is the Rule of Christian Faith? the Meaning of that Enquiry is, by what Way and Means the Knowledge of Christ's Doctrine is conveyed certainly down to us, who live at the distance of so many Ages from the Time of its first Delivery: For this being known, we have the *Rule of Faith*; that is, a Measure by which we may judge what we are to assent to, as the Doctrine of Christ, and what not. So that when any Question ariseth about any particular proposition, whether this be part of Christ's Doctrine, we may be able by this *Rule* to resolve it.



SECT. II. Mr. S's Rule of Faith.

§. 1. **T**HE next Thing to be considered, is his Resolution of this Question ; by which we shall know what his Opinion is concerning the *Rule of Faith* ; for that being known, the Controversy between us will easily be stated.

His Opinion in general is, that *Oral* or *Practical Tradition* (in Opposition to *Writing*, or any other Way that can be assigned) is the *Rule of Faith*. By *Oral* or *Practical Tradition*, he means, <sup>a</sup> *a Delivery down<sup>a</sup> P. 41.* from Hand to Hand (by Words, and a constant Course of frequent and visible Actions, conformable to those Words) of the Sense and Faith of Forefathers.

§. 2. Now that I may bring the Controversy between us to a clear State, I am first to take a more particular View of his Opinion concerning the *Rule of Faith*, that so I may the better understand how much he attributes to Oral Tradition, and what to the Scriptures or written Tradition : And then I am to lay down the Protestant *Rule of Faith*, that so it may appear how far we agree, and how far we differ. The Sum of what he attributes to Oral Tradition, so far as can be collected out of so obscure and confused a Discourse, may be reduced to these Five Heads.

§. 3. *First*, That the Doctrine of Christian Religion was delivered by Christ to the Apostles, and by them published to the World ; and that the Age which first received it from the Apostles, deliver'd it as they received it without any Change or Corruption to their Children, and they to theirs, and so it went on solely by this Way of Oral Tradition. This is the Sum of his Explication of Tradition, *Disc. 5th.*

§. 4. *Secondly*. That this Way alone is not only sufficient to convey this Doctrine down to all Ages certainly, and without any Alteration ; but it is the only possible Way that can be imagined of conveying

PART ing down a Doctrine securely from one Age to another. And this is the natural Result of his Discourse about the *Properties of a Rule of Faith*: For if the true Properties of a *Rule of Faith* do belong to Oral Tradition, then it is a sufficient Means; and if those Properties do solely and essentially appertain to it, and are incomparable to any Thing else (as he endeavours to prove) then it is impossible there should be any other Way.

§. 5. *Thirdly*, That it is impossible this Means should fail or miss of its End; that is, the Doctrine of Christ being once put into this Way of Conveyance, it can neither cease to descend, nor be at any Time corrupted or changed in its Descent. This is that which his *Demonstrations* pretend to prove.

§. 6. *Fourthly*, That the Infallibility of Oral Tradition, or the Impossibility of its failing, is a first and self-evident Principle. This he frequently asserts throughout his Book.

§. 7. *Fifthly*, That this Way of Oral Tradition hath *de facto* in all Ages been acknowledged by Christians, as the only Way and Means whereby the Doctrine of Christianity hath been conveyed down to them. And this is that which he attempts to prove from the *Consent of Authority*.

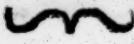
§. 8. As for the Scriptures, he grants them indeed to have been written by Men divinely inspired, and to contain a Divine Doctrine, even the same which is  
 2 P. 177. delivered by Oral Tradition; so he tells us *'Tis certain the Apostles taught the same Doctrine they writ*: But then he denies it to be of any Use without Oral Tradition, because neither the *Letter* nor *Sense* of it can without that be ascertained: So he  
 2 P. 337. saith in his Letter to Dr. Casaubon, *As for the Scriptures (ascertaining their Letter and Sense, which is done by Tradition) 'tis clear they are of incomparable Value, not only for the Divine Doctrine contained in them, but also for many particular Passages, whose Source or first Attestation not being universal, nor their*  
 Nature

*Nature much practical, might possibly have been lost in their Conveyance down by Tradition.* Where though, he give the Scriptures very good Words, it is to be understood, provided they will be subordinate, and acknowledge that they owe their Sense and their being intelligible and useful to Oral Tradition: For if any Man shall presume to say, that this Book hath any certain Sense without Oral Tradition, or that God can write plainly and intelligibly, and that this Book which he hath indited is so written, and doth not depend upon Tradition for its Sense and Interpretation; then the most scurrillous Language is not bad enough for the Scriptures: Then what are those sacred Writings, <sup>a</sup> but *Ink variously figured in* <sup>a</sup> Append. *a Book, <sup>b</sup> unsensed Characters, waxen natur'd Words,* <sup>4th. P.</sup> *not yet sensed, nor having any certain Interpreter, but fit* <sup>319. P. 68.</sup> *to be plaid upon diversly by Quirks of Wit? that is, apt to blunder and confound, but to clear little or nothing.* These, with many other disgraceful Terms, he very liberally bestows upon the Divine Oracles; the Consideration whereof, did it not minister too much Horror, would afford some Comfort; for by this kind of rude usage so familiar with him towards his Adversaries, one may reasonably conjecture, that he doth not reckon the Scriptures among his Friends.

§. 9. And whereas he saith, *That the Scriptures have preserv'd many particular Passages, which, because their Source or first Attestation was not universal, nor their Nature much practical, might possibly have been lost in their Conveyance down by Tradition;* this is impossible, according to his *Hypothesis*: For if neither the Scriptures Letter, nor the certain Sense of it as to the main Body of Christian Doctrine, could have been secured without Oral Tradition; that is, if we could not have known that those Passages which contain the main Points of Christ's Doctrine, either had been written by Men divinely inspir'd, or what the Sense of them was, but from the Consonancy and Agreement of those Passages



PART. fages with the Doctrine which was orally preached  
I. by the Apostles ; how can we be certain either of

 the Letter or Sense of other particular Passages which must necessarily want this Confirmation from Oral Tradition, because *their first Attestation was not universal, nor their Nature much practical?* Nay, his Discourse plainly implies, that we can have no Security at all, either of the Letter or Sense of any other Parts of Scripture, but only those which are coincident with the main Body of Christian Doctrine ; as is evident from these words, <sup>b</sup> *Tradition established, the Church is provided of a certain and infallible Rule to preserve a Copy of the Scriptures Letter truly significative of Christ's Sense, as far as it is coincident with the main Body of Christian Doctrine preached at first ; because Sense writ in Men's Hearts by Tradition, can easily guide them to correct the Alteration of the outward Letter.* This I perceive plainly is the Thing they would be at ; they would correct the outward Letter of Scripture by Sense written in their Hearts ; and then, instead of leaving out the Second Commandment, they would change it into a Precept of giving due Worship to Images, according to the Council of Trent ; and a Thousand other Alterations they must make in the Bible, to make it truly significative of the Sense of their Church. But surely the outward Letter of other Passages of Scripture, which were not intended to signify Points of Faith, is equally liable to alterations : And yet the Church is not by Tradition provided of any Way to correct these Alterations when they happen ; because Tradition doth, as this Corollary implies, only furnish the Church with a certain and infallible Rule of preserving a Copy of the Scriptures Letter, so far as it is coincident with the main Body of Christian Doctrine.

<sup>c</sup>P. 117 §. 10. Again he tells us, <sup>c</sup> *Tradition established, the Church is provided of a certain and infallible Rule to interpret Scripture Letter by, so as to arrive certainly*

*tainly at Christ's Sense, as far as the Letter concerns* SECT. II.  
*the Body of Christian Doctrine preached at first, or*  
*Points requisite to Salvation.* So that whatever he may attribute to Scripture for Fashion's Sake, and to avoid Calumny with the Vulgar, as he says very ingeniously in his Explication of the 15th. Corollary; nevertheless 'tis plain, that according to his own Hypothesis he cannot but look upon it as perfectly useless and pernicious. That 'tis altogether useless according to his Hypothesis, is plain; for the main Body of Christian Doctrine is securely conveyed to us without it, and it can give no kind of Confirmation to it because it receives all its Confirmation from it; only the Church is ever and anon put to a great deal of Trouble to correct the alteration of the outward Letter, by Tradition and Sense written in their Hearts. And as for all other Parts of Scripture which are not coincident with the main Body of Christian Doctrine, we can have no Certainty either that the outward Letter is true, nor, if we could, can we possibly arrive at any certain Sense of them. And that it is intolerably pernicious according to his Hypothesis, is plain, because <sup>d</sup> every silly and up-<sup>d</sup> P. 40  
*start Heresy fathers itself upon it; and when Men leave Tradition (as he supposeth all Hereticks do) the Scripture is the most dangerous Engine that could have been invented, being to such Persons only* <sup>e</sup> wax-<sup>e</sup> P. 68.  
*en natur'd Words, not sensed, nor having any certain Interpreter, but fit to be play'd upon diversly by Quirks of Wit; that is, apt to blunder and confound, but to clear little or nothing.* And indeed, if his Hypothesis were true, the Scriptures might well deserve all the contemptuous Language, which he used against them; and <sup>a</sup> Mr. White's Comparison of them with <sup>a</sup> Apology  
*Lilly's Almanack, would not only be pardonable but* <sup>for Tradition, P.</sup>  
*proper; and (unless he added it out of Prudence,* <sup>165</sup>  
*and for the Peoples Sake, whom he may think too superstitiously conceited of those Books) he might have spared that cold Excuse which he makes for u-*  
*sing*

PART sing this Similitude, that *it was agreeable rather to the Impertinency of the Objection than the Dignity of the Subject.* Certain it is, if these Men are

true to their own Principles, that notwithstanding the high Reverence and Esteem pretended to be born by them and their Church to the Scriptures they must heartily despise them, and wish them out of the Way: and even look upon it as a great Oversight of the Divine Providence to trouble his Church with a Book, which, if their Discourse be of any Consequence, can stand Catholicks in no Stead at all, and is so dangerous and mischievous a Weapon in the Hands of Hereticks.

### SECT. III. *The Protestant Doctrine concerning the Rule of Faith.*

§. I. **H**AVING thus taken a View of his Opinion, and considered how much he attributes to Oral Tradition, and how little to the Scriptures; before I assail his *Hypothesis*, I shall lay down the Protestant *Rule of Faith*; not that so much is necessary for the answering of his Book, but that he may have no Colour of Objection that I proceed altogether in the destructive Way, and overthrow his *Principle*, as he calls it, without substituting another in its Room The Opinion then of the Protestants concerning the *Rule of Faith*, is this in general, That those Books which we call the Holy Scriptures, are the means whereby the Christian Doctrine hath been brought down to us. And that he may now clearly understand this, together with the Grounds of it (which in Reason he ought to have done before he had forsaken us) I shall declare more particularly in these following Propositions.

§. 2. *First*, That the Doctrine of Christian Religion was by Christ delivered to the Apostles, and by them first preached to the World, and afterwards by them committed to Writing; which

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Writings, or Books, have been transmitted from **SECT.**  
 one Age to another down to us : So far I take **III.**  
 to be granted by our present Adversaries. That  
 the Christian Doctrine was by Christ delivered to  
 the Apostles, and by them publish'd to the World,  
 is Part of their own *Hypothesis* : That this Do-  
 ctrine was afterwards by the Apostles committed  
 to writing, he also grants, *Corol. 29.* <sup>a</sup> 'Tis cer-<sup>a</sup> p 117.  
*tain the Apostles taught the same Doctrine they writ ;*  
 and if so, it must be as certain that they writ  
 the same Doctrine which they taught. I know  
 it is the general Tenet of the Papists, that the  
 Scriptures do not contain the entire Body of Chri-  
 stian Doctrine, but that besides the Doctrines  
 contained in Scripture, there are also others  
 brought down to us by oral or unwritten Tradition.  
 But Mr. S. who supposeth the whole Doc-  
 trine of Christian Religion to be certainly conveyed  
 down to us solely by Oral Tradition, doth not any-  
 where, that I remember, deny that all the same  
 Doctrine is contained in the Scriptures; only he  
 denies the Scriptures to be a Means sufficient to  
 convey this Doctrine to us with Certainty, so that  
 we can by them be infallibly assur'd what is Christ's  
 Doctrine, and what not. Nay, he seems in that  
 Passage I last cited to grant this, in saying that  
 the Apostles did both teach and write the same  
 Doctrine. I am sure Mr. *White* (whom he follows  
 very closely throughout his whole Book) does not  
 deny this in his *Apology for Tradition* <sup>b</sup> where he <sup>p. 171.</sup>  
 saith, *That it is not the Catholick Position, that*  
*all its Doctrines are not contained in the Scriptures.*  
 And that those Writings or Books which we call  
 the Holy Scriptures, have been transmitted down  
 to us, is unquestionable Matter of Fact, and grant-  
 ed universally by the Papists, as to all those Books  
 which are owned by Protestants for Canonical.  
 §. 3. *Secondly*, That the Way of Writing is a  
 sufficient Means to convey a Doctrine to the  
 Know-

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I.

Knowledge of those who live in Times very remote from the Age of its first Delivery. According to his *Hypothesis*, there is no possible Way of conveying a Doctrine with Certainty and Security besides that of Oral Tradition: the Falseness of which will sufficiently appear, when I shall have shewn, that the true properties of a Rule of Faith do agree to the Scriptures, and not to Oral Tradition. In the mean time I shall only offer this to his Consideration, that whatever can be orally delivered in plain and intelligible Words, may be written in the same Words; and that a Writing or Book which is publick, and in every one's Hand, may be conveyed down with at least as much Certainty and Security, and with as little Danger of Alteration, as an Oral Tradition. And if so, I understand not what can render it impossible for a Book to convey down a Doctrine to the Knowledge of after-Ages. Besides, if he had looked well about him, he could not but have apprehended some little Inconvenience in making that an essential Part of his *Hypothesis*, which is contradicted by plain and constant Experience: For that any kind of Doctrine may be sufficiently convey'd, by Books to the Knowledge of After-Ages provided those Books be but written intelligibly, and preserved from Change and Corruption in the Conveyance (both which I shall be so bold as to suppose possible) is as little doubted by the Generality of Mankind as that there are Books. And surely we Christians cannot think it impossible to convey a Doctrine to Posterity by Books, when we consider that God himself pitched upon this Way for conveyance of the Doctrine of the *Jewish* Religion to After-Ages; because it is not likely that so wise an Agent should pitch upon a Means whereby it was impossible he should attain his End.

§. 4. *Thirdly*, That the Books of Scripture are SECT. III.  
 sufficiently plain, as to all Things necessary to be  
 believed and practised. He that denies this, ought  
 in reason to instance in some necessary Point of  
 Faith, or matter of Practice, which is not in some  
 Place of Scripture or other plainly delivered.  
 For it is not a sufficient Objection to say, <sup>a</sup> That P. 38, 39.  
 the greatest Wits among the Protestants differ a-  
 bout the Sense of those Texts, wherein the Gene-  
 rality of them suppose the Divinity of Christ to  
 be plainly and clearly expressed; because, if no-  
 thing were to be accounted sufficiently plain, but  
 what it is impossible a great Wit should be able  
 to wrest to any other Sense, not only the Scriptures,  
 but all other Books, and (which is worst of all  
 to him that makes this Objection) all Oral Tra-  
 dition would fall into Uncertainty. Doth the Tra-  
 ditionary Church pretend that the Doctrine of  
 Christ's Divinity is conveyed down to her by O-  
 ral Tradition more plainly than it is expressed in  
 Scripture? I would fain know what plainer Words  
 she ever used to express this Point of Faith by,  
 than what the Scripture useth, which expressly  
 calls him *God, the true God, God over all, blessed for  
 evermore*. If it be said, that those who deny the  
 Divinity of Christ have been able to evade these  
 and all other Texts of Scripture, but they could  
 never elude the Definitions of the Church in that  
 Matter; it is easily answered, that the same Arts  
 would equally have eluded both; but there was no  
 Reason why they should trouble themselves so  
 much about the Latter; for why should they be  
 solicitous to wrest the Definitions of *Councils*, and  
 conform them to their own Opinion, who had no  
 Regard to the Church's Authority? If those great  
 Wits (as he calls them) had believed the Sayings  
 of Scripture to be of no greater Authority than the  
 Definitions of Councils, they would have answer-  
 ed Texts of Scripture, as they have done the De-  
 finitions



PART. finitions of Councils ; not by endeavouring to interpret them to another Sense, but by downright denying their Authority. So that it seems that *Oral Tradition* is liable to the same Inconvenience with the *Written*, as to this particular.

§. 5. And of this I shall give him a plain Instance in two great Wits of their Church, the present Pope and Mr. *White* ; the one the Head of the *Traditionary Church*, as Mr. S. calls it ; the other the great Master of the *Traditionary Doctrine*. These two great Wits, the Pope and Mr. *White*, notwithstanding the Plainness of Oral Tradition, and the Impossibility of being ignorant of it, or mistaking it, have yet been so unhappy as to differ about several Points of Faith ; insomuch that Mr. *White* is unkindly censured for it at *Rome*, and perhaps here in *England* the Pope speeds no better ; however, the Difference continues still so wide, that Mr. *White* hath thought fit to disobey the Summons of his chief Pastor, and like a prudent Man, rather to write against him here out of Harm's-way, than to venture the Infallibility of plain *Oral Tradition* for the *Doctrines* he maintains, against a *Practical Tradition* which they have at *Rome* of killing Hereticks.

\* p. 54. Methinks Mr. S. might have spared his Brags, that he hath evinced from clear Reason, \* that it is far more impossible to make a Man not to be, than not to know what is riveted into his Soul by so oft repeated Sensations, (as the Christian Faith is by Oral and Practical Tradition ;) and that it exceeds all the Power of Nature (abstracting from the Cases of Madness and violent Disease) to blot Knowledge, thus fix'd, out of the Soul of one single Believer ; insomuch, that sooner may all Mankind perish than the regulative Virtue of Tradition miscarry ; nay, sooner may the Sinews of entire Nature, by overstraining, crack, and she lose all her Activity and Motion, that is, her self, than one single Part of that innumerable

Mul.

Multitude which integrate the vast Testification, which we call Tradition, can possibly be violated; when after he hath told us, <sup>a</sup> that the City of Rome was blest with more vigorous Causes to imprint Christ's Doctrine at first, and recommend it to the next Age, than were found any-where else; and consequently, that the Stream of Tradition, in its Source and first putting into Motion, was more particularly vigorous there than in any other See; and that the chief Pastor of that See hath a particular Title to Infallibility built upon Tradition, above any other Pastor whatsoever; not to dilate on the particular Assistances to that Bishop, springing out of his divinely constituted Office: When, I say, after all this quaint Reasoning and rumbling Rhetorick about the Infallibility of Oral Tradition, and the particular Infallibility of the Bishop of Rome built on Tradition, we cannot but remember that this great Oracle of Oral Tradition the Pope, and this great Master of it Mr. White, who is so peculiarly skill'd in the Rule of Faith, have so manifestly declar'd themselves to differ in Points of Faith. For that the Pope, and his Congregation General at Rome, have condemn'd all his Books for this Reason, because <sup>b</sup> they contain several Propositions manifestly heretical, is a sign that these Two great Wits do not very well hit it in Matters of Faith; and either that they do not both agree in the same Rule of Faith, or that one of them does not rightly understand it, or not follow it. And now, why may not that which Mr. S. unjustly says concerning the Use of Scripture, be upon this Account justly apply'd to the Business of Oral Tradition? <sup>c</sup> If we see Two such eminent Wits among the Papists (the Pope and Mr. White) making use of the self-same, and as they conceive, the best Advantages their Rule of Faith gives them; and availing themselves the best they can by acquiring Skill, yet differ about Matters of Faith; what Certainty can we undertakingly promise to wea-

SECT. III.

P. 116.

<sup>b</sup> M. Wh. Exetasis, P. 9.

<sup>c</sup> p. 39.

**PART.** *ker Heads, that is, to the Generality of the Papists,*  
**I.** in whom the Governors of the Church do professedly cherish Ignorance for the increasing of their Devotion?

§. 6. *Fourthly,* We have sufficient Assurance that the Books of Scripture are conveyed down to us without any material Corruption or Alteration. And he that denies this, must either reject the Authority of all Books, because we cannot be certain whether they be the same now that they were at first; or else, give some probable Reason why these should be more liable to Corruption than others. But any Man that considers Things, will easily find, that it is much more improbable that these Books should have been either wilfully or involuntarily corrupted, in any Thing material to Faith or a good Life, than any other Books in the World; whether we consider the peculiar Providence of God engaged for the preservation of them or the peculiar Circumstances of these Books. If they were written by Men divinely inspired, and are of use to Christians, as is acknowledged (at least in Words) on all Hands; nothing is more credible, than that the same Divine Providence which took care for the Publishing of them, would likewise be concerned to preserve them entire. And if we consider the peculiar Circumstances of these Books, we shall find it morally impossible that they should have been Materially corrupted, because being of universal and mighty Concernment, and at first diffused into many Hands, and soon after translated into most Languages, and most Passages in them cited in Books now extant, and all these now agreeing in all Matters of Importance, we have as great Assurance as can be had concerning any Thing of this Nature that they have not suffered any material Alteration, and far greater than any Man can have concerning the Incorruption of their Oral Tradition, as I shall shew



shew when I come to answer the Thing which he SECT.  
calls Demonstration. III.

§. 7. *Fifthly*, That *de facto* the Scripture hath been acknowledged by all Christians, in former Ages, to be the Means whereby the Doctrine of Christ hath with greatest Certainty been convey'd to them. One good Evidence of this is, That the primitive Adversaries of Christian Religion did always look upon the Scripture as the Standard and Measure of the Christian Doctrine, and in all their writing against Christianity, took that for granted to be the Christian Faith which was contained in those Books; there having not as yet any Philosopher risen up who had demonstrated to the World, that a Doctrine could not, with sufficient Certainty and Clearness, be conveyed by Writing from one Age to another. But how absurd had this Method of confuting Christian Religion been, if it had been then the publick Profession of Christians that the Scriptures were not the Rule of their Faith? How easily had it been for the Fathers, who apologized for, and defended Christian Religion, to have told them they took a wrong Measure of their Doctrine; for it was not the Principle of Christians, that their Faith was conveyed to them by the Scriptures, and therefore it was a fond Undertaking to attack their Religion that Way; but if they would effectually argue against it, they ought to enquire what that Doctrine was which was orally delivered from Father to Son, without which the Scriptures could signify no more to them than an unknown Cypher without a Key; being of themselves, without the Light of Oral Tradition, only a Heap of unintelligible Words, *unsensed Characters*, and *Ink variously figured in a Book*; and therefore it was a gross Mistake in them to think they could understand the Christian Religion (like their own Philosophy) by reading of those Books, or confute it

*Three Evidence  
that y<sup>e</sup> Scripture  
was acknowledged  
by y<sup>e</sup> Primitive  
Church*

PART. by confuting them. Thus the *Fathers* might have

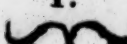
I. defended their Religion; nay they ought in all Reason to have taken this Course, and to have appealed from those dead senseless Books to the *true Rule of Faith the living Voice of the Church essential*. But doth Mr. S. find any thing to this Purpose in the *Apologies* of the *Fathers*? If he hath discover'd any such Matter, he might do well to acquaint the World with it, and make them wiser; in the mean time I shall inform him what I have found, that the *Fathers* never except against that Method, but appeal frequently from the slanderous Reports and Misrepresentations which were made of their Doctrine, to the Books of Scripture, as the true Standard of it.

§. 8. Another *Evidence* that Christians in all Ages since the Apostles Times have owned the Scriptures for the *Rule of their Faith*, is, That the *Fathers*, in their *Homilies*, did use constantly to declare to the People what they were to believe, and what they were to practise out of the Scriptures; which had been most absurd and senseless, had they believed not the Scriptures but something else to have been the Rule of Faith and Manners. For what could tend more to the seducing of the People from Mr. S's supposed *Rule of Faith, Oral Tradition*, than to make a daily Practice of declaring and confirming the Doctrines of the Christian Faith from the Scriptures? Had the ancient Fathers been right for Mr. S's Way, they would not have built their Doctrine upon Scripture; perhaps not have mentioned it, for fear of giving the People an Occasion to grow familiar with so dangerous a Book, but rather (as their more prudent Posterity have done) would have lock'd it up from the People in an unknown Tongue, and have set open the Stores of good wholesome Traditions, and instead of telling them (as they do most frequently) *thus saith the Scripture*, would

would only have told them, this is *the Voice of the* SECT.  
*Essential Church, thus it hath been delivered down* III.  
*by Hand to us from our Forefathers.*

§. 9. I might add for a *Third Evidence*, the great Malice of the Enemies and Persecutors of Christianity against this Book, and their cruel Endeavours to extort it out of the Hands of Christians, and destroy it out of the World, that by this Means they might extirpate Christianity: for it seems they thought that the abolishing of this Book would have been the Ruin of that Religion. But (according to Mr. S's Opinion) their Malice wanted Wit; for had all the Bibles in the World been burn'd, Christian Religion would nevertheless have been entirely preserv'd, and safely transmitted down to us *by Sense written in Mens Hearts*, with the good Help of Mr. S's Demonstrations. Nay, their Church would have been a great Gainer by it; for this Occasion and Parent of all Heresy the *Scripture* being once out of the Way, she might have had all in her own Hands, and by leading the People in the safe Paths of Tradition, and consequently of Science, might have made them wise enough to obey. Well, but suppose the Persecutors of Christianity mistook themselves in their Design, how came the Christians in those Days to be so tenacious of this Book, that rather than deliver it, they would yield up themselves to Torments and Death? And why did they look upon those who out of Fear delivered up their Books, as Apostates and Renouncers of Christianity? And if they had not thought this Book to be the great Instrument of their Faith and Salvation, and if it had really been of no greater Consideration than Mr. W. and Mr. S. would make it; why should they be so loth to part with a few *unsens'd Characters, waxen-natur'd Words, to be play'd upon diversly by Quirks of Wit, that is, apt to blunder and confound, but to clear little or nothing?*



PART. why should they value their Lives at so cheap a rate as to throw them away for a few insignificant I.  Scrawls, and to shed their Blood for a little Ink variously figured in a Book? Did they not know, that the Safety of Christianity did not depend upon this Book? Did no Christian then understand that, which (according to Mr. S.) no Christian can be ignorant of, viz. that not the Scripture, but *unmistakable and indefectible Oral Tradition* was the *Rule of Faith*? Why did they not consider that though this *Letter-Rule* of Hereticks had been consum'd to Ashes, yet their *Faith* would have lain safe, and been preserved entire in its *Spiritual Causes, Mens Minds, the noblest Pieces in Nature*? Some of them indeed did deliver up their Books, and were call'd *Traditors*, and I have some Ground to believe that these were the only *Traditionary Christians* of that Time, and that the rest were Confessors and Martyrs for the *Letter-Rule*. And if this be not evidence enough, that the Scriptures have always been acknowledged by Christians for the Rule of Faith, I shall, when I come to examine his Testimonies for Tradition (with the good Leave of his *Distinction* between *Speculators* and *Testifiers*) prove by most express Testimony, that it was the general Opinion of the Fathers, *that the Scriptures are the Rule of Christian Faith*; and then, if his *Demonstration* of the Infallibility of Tradition will enforce, that as *Testifiers* they must needs have spoken otherwise, who can help it?

2 p. 34.

SECT. IV. *How much<sup>ch</sup> Protestants allow to Oral Tradition.*

§. I. **H**AVING thus laid down the *Protestant Rule of Faith*, with the Grounds of it, all that now remains for me to do towards the clear and full stating of the Controversy between

tween us, is to take notice briefly, and with due Limitations, SECT. IV.

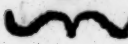
*First*, How much the Protestants do allow to Oral Tradition.

*Secondly*, What those Things are which Mr. S. thinks fit to attribute to his *Rule of Faith*, which we see no Cause to attribute to ours: And when this is done, any one may easily discern how far we differ.

§. 2. *First*, How much Protestants do allow to Oral Tradition.

1. We grant that Oral Tradition, in some Circumstances, may be a sufficient Way of conveying a Doctrine; but withal we deny, that such Circumstances are now in being. In the first Ages of the World, when the *Credenda* or *Articles* of Religion, and the *Agenda* or *Precepts* of it were but few, and such as had the Evidence of natural Light; when the World was contracted into a few Families in Comparison, and the Age of Man ordinarily extended to Six or Seven Hundred Years; it is easy to imagine how such a Doctrine in such Circumstances, might have been propagated by Oral Tradition, without any great Change or Alterations. *Adam* lived till *Methuselah* was above Two Hundred Years old, *Methuselah* lived till *Sem* was near an Hundred, and *Sem* out-liv'd *Abraham*: So that this Tradition need not pass through more than two Hands betwixt *Adam* and *Abraham*. But tho' this Way was sufficient to have preserved Religion in the World, if Men had not been wanting themselves; yet we find it did not prove *effectual*: For through the Corruption and Negligence of Men after the Flood (if not before) when the World began to multiply, and the Age of Man was shorten'd, the Knowledge and Worship of the one true God was generally lost in the World. And so far as appears by Scripture-History (the only Record we have of those Times) when

**PART.** when God called out *Abraham* from *Ur* of the *Chaldees*, the whole World was laps'd into Poly-

**I.**  theism and Idolatry. Therefore, for the greater Security of Religion afterwards, when the Posterity of *Abraham* was multiplied into a great Nation, the Wisdom of God did not think fit to entrust the Doctrine of Religion any longer to the fallible and uncertain Way of Tradition, but committed it to Writing. Now that God pitched upon this Way, after the World had sadly experienc'd the Unsuccessfulness of the other, seems to be a very good Evidence that this was the better and more secure Way; it being the usual Method of the Divine Dispensations not to go backwards, but to move towards Perfection, and to proceed from that which is less perfect to that

<sup>a</sup> Heb. 8. which is more. And the Apostle's <sup>a</sup> reasoning concerning the Two Covenants, is very applicable to these Two Methods of conveying the Doctrine of Religion; *if the First had been faultless, then should no Place have been sought for a Second.*

§. 3. So likewise, when Christ revealed his Doctrine to the World, it was not in his Lifetime committed to writing, because it was entertained but by a few, who were his Disciples and Followers, and who, so long as he continued with them, had a living Oracle to teach them. After his Death, the Apostles, who were to publish this Doctrine to the World, were assisted by an infallible Spirit, so as they were secured from Error and mistake in the Delivery of it. But when this extraordinary Assistance failed, there was need of some other Means to convey it to Posterity, that so it might be a fix'd and standing Rule of Faith and Manners to the end of the World. To this End the Providence of God took Care to have it committed to Writing. And that Mr. S. may see this is not a Conjecture of Protestants, but the Sense of former Times, I shall refer him to St.

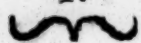
*Chrysostom*



Chrysostom (*Homil. 1 in Matth.*) who tells us, *That* SECT. IV.  
*Christ left nothing in writing to his Apostles, but in-*  
*stead thereof did promise to bestow upon them the*  
*Grace of his Holy Spirit, saying, John 14. He shall*  
*bring all Things to your Remembrance, &c. But*  
*because in Progress of Time there were many grievous*  
*Miscarriages both in Matter of Opinion, and also of*  
*Life and Manners; therefore it was requisite that*  
*the Memory of this Doctrine should be preserved by*  
*Writing. So long then as the Apostles lived, who*  
*were thus infallibly assisted, the Way of Oral Tra-*  
*dition was secure, but no longer; nor even then,*  
*from the Nature of the Thing, but from that ex-*  
*traordinary and supernatural Assistance which ac-*  
*companied the Deliverers.*

§. 4. And therefore it is no good Way of Ar-  
 gument against the Way of Tradition by Writing,  
 which he lays so much Weight upon, *That the* p. 40.  
*Apostles and their Successors went not with Books in*  
*their Hands to preach and deliver Christ's Doctrine,*  
*but Words in their Mouths; and that primitive An-*  
*tiquity learned their Faith, by another Method, a*  
*long Time before many of those Books were universa-*  
*ly spread among the Vulgar. For what if there was*  
*no need of writing this Doctrine, whilst those li-*  
*ving Oracles the Apostles were present with the*  
*Church? Doth it therefore follow that there was*  
*no need of it afterwards when the Apostles were*  
*dead, and that extraordinary and super-natural*  
*Assistance was ceased? If the Preachers now-a-days*  
*could give us any such Assurance, and confirm all*  
*they preach by such frequent, and publick,*  
*and unquestionable Miracles as the Apostles did;*  
*then we need not examine the Doctrines they*  
*taught by any other Rule, but ought to regulate our*  
*Belief by what they deliver to us: But seeing this*  
*is not the Case, That ought in all Reason to be*  
*the Rule of our Faith, which hath brought down*  
*to us the Doctrine of Christ with the greatest*  
 Certainty;

PART. Certainty; and this I shall prove the Scriptures to have done.



I. §. 5. So that in those Circumstances I have mentioned, *We* allow Oral Tradition to have been a sufficient Way of conveying a Doctrine; but now considering the great Increase of Mankind, and the Shortness of Man's Life in these latter Ages of the World, and the long Tract of Time from the Apostles Age down to us, and the innumerable Accidents whereby in the Space of 1500 Years Oral Tradition might receive insensible Alterations, so as at last to become quite another Thing from what it was at first, by passing through many Hands; in which Passage all the Mistakes and Corruptions which (in the several Ages through which it was transmitted) did happen, either through Ignorance, or Forgetfulness, or out of Interest and Design, are necessarily derived into the Last: So that the farther it goes, the more Alteration it is liable to; because as it passeth along, more Errors and Corruptions are infused into it. I say, considering all this, we deny, that the Doctrine of Christian Religion could, with any probable Security and Certainty, have been conveyed down to us by the Way of Oral Tradition; and therefore do reasonably believe, that God foreseeing this, did in his Wisdom so order Things, that those Persons who were assisted by an infallible Spirit in the Delivery of this Doctrine, should, before they left the World, commit it to Writing; which was accordingly done: And by this Instrument the Doctrine of Faith hath been conveyed down to us.

§. 6. *Secondly*, We allow, that Tradition *Oral* and *Written*, do give us sufficient Assurance that the Books of Scripture which we now have, are the very Books which were written by the Apostles and Evangelists: Nay farther, that *Oral* Tradition alone is a competent Evidence in this Case; but withal we deny, That Oral Tradition is therefore to be accounted the *Rule of Faith*.

The

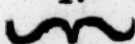
The general Assurance that we have concern-  
 ing Books written long ago, that they are so an-  
 cient, and were written by those whose Names  
 they bear, is a constant and uncontroll'd Tradition  
 of this, transmitted from one Age to another,  
 partly Orally, and partly by the Testimony of o-  
 ther Books. Thus much is common to Scripture  
 with other Books. But then the Scriptures have  
 this peculiar Advantage above other Books, that  
 being of a greater and more universal Concern-  
 ment, they have been more common and in every  
 Body's Hands, more read and studied than any o-  
 ther Books in the World whatsoever; and conse-  
 quently, they have a more universal and better  
 grounded Attestation. Moreover, they have not  
 only been owned universally in all Ages by Chri-  
 stians (except three or four Books of them, which  
 for some time were questioned by some Churches,  
 but have since been generally received;) but the  
 greatest enemies of our Religion, the *Jews* and  
 Heathens, never questioned the Antiquity of them,  
 but have always taken it for granted, that they  
 were the very Books which the Apostles writ.  
 And this is as great an Assurance as we can have  
 concerning any ancient Book, without a particu-  
 lar and immediate Revelation.

§. 7. And this Concession doth not, as Mr. S.  
 supposeth, make Oral Tradition to be finally the  
*Rule of Faith*; for the Meaning of this Question  
 (*What is the Rule of Faith?*) is, What is the next  
 and immediate Means whereby the Knowledge of  
 Christ's Doctrine is conveyed to us? So that al-  
 tho' Oral Tradition be the Means whereby we come  
 to know that these are the Books of Scripture,  
 yet these Books are the next and immediate Means  
 whereby we come to know what is Christ's Doc-  
 trine, and consequently what we are to believe.

§. 8. Nor doth this Concession make Oral Tra-  
 dition to be the *Rule of Faith*, by a Parity of Rea-  
 son;



PART. son; as if because we acknowledge that Oral Tradition alone can with competent Certainty transmit a Book to After-Ages, we must therefore grant that it can with as much Certainty convey a Doctrine consisting of several Articles of Faith

I.  (nay, very many, as Mr. *White* acknowledges <sup>a</sup> and many Laws and Precepts of Life: So because Oral Tradition sufficiently assures us that this is *Magna Charta*, and *That the Statute-Book*, in which are contain'd *those Laws which it concerns every Man to be skilful in*; therefore, by like Parity of Reason, it must follow, that Tradition itself is better than a Book, even *the best Way imaginable to convey down such Laws to us*. Mr. *S.* saith <sup>b</sup> expressly it is; but how truly, I appeal to Experience, and the Wisdom of all Lawgivers, who seem to think otherwise. Tradition is already defin'd to us, *a Delivery down from Hand to Hand of the Sense and Faith of Forefathers, i. e. of the Gospel or Message of Christ*. Now, suppose any Oral Message, consisting of an hundred Particularities, were to be delivered to an hundred several Persons of different Degrees of understanding and Memory, by them to be conveyed to an hundred more, who are to convey it to others, and so onwards to a hundred Descents; Is it probable this Message, with all the Particularities of it, would be as truly conveyed thro' so many Mouths, as if it were written down in so many Letters, concerning which every Bearer should need to say no more than this, That it was delivered to him as a Letter written by him whose Name was subscribed to it? I think it not probable, though the Mens Lives were concerned every one for the faithful Delivery of his Errand or Letter: For the *Letter* is a Message which no Man can mistake in, unless he will; but the *Errand* so difficult, and perplexed with its Multitude of Particulars, that it is an equal Wager against every one

<sup>a</sup> *Rushw.*  
Dial. 4.  
Sect. 9.

<sup>b</sup> P. 23.

of the Messengers, that he either forgets, or mis-SECT.  
takes something in it ; it is Ten Thousand to One, IV.  
that the first Hundred do not all agree in it ; it is a  
Million to One, that the next Succession do not all  
deliver it truly ; for if any one of the first Hundred  
mistook or forgot any Thing, it is then impossible  
that he that received it from him should deliver it  
right ; and so the farther it goes, the greater Change  
it is liable to. Yet after all this, I do not say but  
it may be demonstrated, in Mr. S's Way, to have  
more of Certainty in it than the Original Letter.

§. 9. *Thirdly*, We allow, That the Doctrine of  
Christian Religion hath in all Ages been preached to  
the People by the Pastors of the Church, and taught  
by Christian Parents to their Children ; but with  
great Difference, by some more plainly, and truly,  
and perfectly ; by others with less Care and Exact-  
ness, according to the different Degrees of Ability  
and Integrity in Pastors or Parents ; and likewise  
with very different Success, according to the differ-  
ent Capacities and Dispositions of the Learners.  
We allow likewise, That there hath been a constant  
Course of visible Actions, conformable, in some  
Measure, to the Principles of Christianity ; but then  
we say, that those outward Acts and Circumstances of  
Religion may have undergone great Variations, and  
received great Change, by Addition to them, and  
Defalcation from them in several Ages. That this  
not only is possible, but hath actually happened, I  
shall shew when I come to answer his Demonstrations.  
Now, that several of the main Doctrines of  
Faith contained in the Scripture, and Actions there-  
in commanded, have been taught and practised by  
Christians in all Ages (as the Articles summed up  
in the Apostles Creed, the Use of the Two Sacra-  
ments) is a good Evidence so far, that the Scrip-  
tures contain the Doctrine of Christian Religion.  
But then, if we consider how we come to know  
that such Points of Faith have been taught, and  
such

PART. such external Actions practised in all Ages, it is not  
 I. enough to say, there is a present Multitude of Christians that profess to have received such Doctrines as ever believed and practised, and from hence to infer that they were so; the Inconsequence of which Argument I shall have a better Occasion to shew afterwards: But he that will prove this to any Man's Satisfaction, must make it evident from the best Monuments and Records of several Ages, that is, from the most authentick Books of those Times, that such Doctrines have in all those Ages been constantly and universally taught and practised. But then if from those Records of former Times it appear that other Doctrines, not contain'd in the Scriptures, were not taught and practised universally in all Ages, but have crept in by Degrees, some in one Age, and some in another, according as Ignorance and Superstition in the People, Ambition and Interest in the chief Pastors of the Church, have ministred Occasion and Opportunity; and that the Innovators of these Doctrines and Practices, have all along pretended to confirm them out of Scripture as the acknowledg'd *Rule of Faith*; and have likewise acknowledged the Books of Scripture to have descended without any material Corruption or Alteration (all which will sufficiently appear in the Process of my Discourse;) then cannot the Oral and Practical Tradition of the present Church, concerning any Doctrine, as ever believed and practised, which hath no real Foundation in Scripture, be any Argument against these Books, as if they did not fully and clearly contain the Christian Doctrine. And to say the Scripture is to be interpreted by Oral and Practical Tradition, is no more reasonable than it would be to interpret the ancient Books of the Law, by the present Practice of it; which every one, that compares Things fairly together, must acknowledge to be full of Deviations from the ancient Law.



SECT. V. *How much Mr. S. attributes to his Rule of Faith, more than Protestants to theirs.*

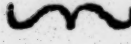
SECT.  
V.

§. I. 2dly, **H**OW much more he attributes to his Rule of Faith, than we think fit to attribute to ours.

I. We do not say, that it is impossible in the Nature of the Thing that this Rule should fail, that is, either that these Books should cease to descend, or should be corrupted. This we do not attribute to them, because there is no Need we should. We believe the Providence of God will take Care of them, and secure them from being either lost or materially corrupted; yet we think it very possible that all the Books in the World may be burn'd or otherwise destroyed. All that we affirm concerning our Rule of Faith, is, that it is abundantly sufficient (if Men be not wanting to themselves) to convey the Christian Doctrine to all successive Ages; and we think him very unreasonable that expects that God should do more than what is abundantly enough, for the perpetuating of Christian Religion in the World.

§. 2. *Secondly*, Nor do we say, that That Certainty and Assurance which we have, that these Books are the same that were written by the Apostles, is a *first and self-evident Principle*: but only that it is a Truth capable of Evidence sufficient, and as much as we can have for a Thing of that Nature. Mr. S. may, if he please, say that Tradition's Certainty is a first and self-evident Principle; but then he that says this, should take heed how he takes upon him to demonstrate it. *Aristotle* was so wise as never to demonstrate first Principles, for which he gives this very good Reason, because they cannot be demonstrated. And most prudent Men are of Opinion, that a self-evident Principle, of all Things in the World should not be demonstrated, because it needs not: For to what purpose should a Man write a Book

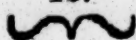
PART to prove that which every Man must assent to without any Proof, so soon as it is propounded to him?

I.  I have always taken a self-evident Principle to be such a Proposition, as having in it self-sufficient Evidence of its own Truth, and not needing to be made evident by any thing else. If I be herein mistaken, I desire Mr. S. to inform me better.

§. 3. So that the true State of the Controversy between us, is, Whether *Oral* and *Practical Tradition*, in Opposition to *Writing* and *Books*, be the only Way and Means whereby the Doctrine of Christ can with Certainty and Security be conveyed down to us, who live at this Distance from the Age of Christ and his Apostles: This *He* affirms, and the *Protestants* deny, not only that it is the sole Means, but that it is sufficient for the certain Conveyance of this Doctrine; and withal affirm, That this Doctrine hath been conveyed down to us by the Books of Holy Scripture, as the proper Measure and Standard of our Religion: But then they do not exclude Oral Tradition from being one Means of conveying to us the certain Knowledge of these Books; nor do they exclude the authentick Records of former Ages, nor the constant Teaching and Practice of this Doctrine, from being subordinate Means and Helps of conveying it from one Age to another; nay, so far are they from excluding these concurrent Means, that they suppose them always to have been used, and to have been of great Advantage for the propagating and explaining of this Doctrine, so far as they have been truly subordinate to, and regulated by these sacred Oracles, the Holy Scriptures, which, they say, do truly and fully contain that Doctrine which Christ delivered to his Apostles, and they preached to the World. To illustrate this by an instance: Suppose there were a Controversy now on Foot, how Men might come to know what was the true *Art* of *Logick* which *Aristotle* taught his *Scholars*; and some should be of Opinion, that the only Way to know this

this would be by Oral Tradition from his Scholars ; SECT. V.  
 which we might easily understand by consulting those of the present Age, who learned it from those who received it from them, who at last had it from *Aristotle* himself: But others should think it the surest Way to study his *Organon*, a Book acknowledged by all his Scholars to have been written by himself, and to contain that Doctrine which he taught them. They who take this latter Course, suppose the Authority of Oral Tradition for the conveying to them the Knowledge of this Book ; and do suppose this Doctrine to have been taught and practised in all Ages, and a great many Books to have been written by way of Comment and Explication of this Doctrine ; and that these have been good Helps of promoting the Knowledge of it. And they may well enough suppose all this, and yet be of Opinion that the truest Measure and Standard of *Aristotle's* Doctrine is his own Book ; and that it would be a fond Thing in a Man, by forcing an Interpretation upon his Book, either contrary to, or very foreign and remote from the obvious Sense of his Words, to go about to reconcile this Book with that Method of disputing which is used by the professed *Aristotelians* of the present Age, and with all that Scholastick Jargon which Mr. S. learned at *Lisbon*, and has made him so great a Man in the *Science of all Controversy*, as even to enable him to demonstrate *first* and self-evident Principles, a Trick not to be learned out of *Aristotle's Organon*. The Application is so easy that I need not make it.





*Concerning the Properties of the Rule of Faith;  
and whether they agree solely to Oral Tradition.*

## S E C T. I.

§. 1. **H**AVING thus endeavoured to bring the Controversy between us to its clear and true State, that so we might not quarrel in the Dark, and dispute about we know not what; I come now to grapple more closely with his Book. And the main Foundations of his Discourse may be reduced to these Three Heads.

*First*, That the essential Properties of such a Way and Means as can with Certainty and Security convey down to us the Doctrine of Christ, belong solely to Oral Tradition. This he endeavours to prove in his *Five* first *Discourses*.

*Secondly*, That it is impossible that this Way of Oral Tradition should fail. And this he pretends to prove in his *Four* last *Discourses*.

*Thirdly*, That Oral Tradition hath been generally reputed by Christians in all Ages, the sole Way and Means of conveying down to them the Doctrines of Christ. And this he attempts to shew in his last Chapter, which he calls, *The consent of Authority to the Substance of his foregoing Discourses*. If he make good these Three Things, he hath acquitted himself well in his Undertaking; but whether he hath made them good or not, is now to be examined.

§. 2. *First*, Whether the essential Properties of such a Way and Means as can with Certainty and Security convey down to us the Knowledge of Christ's Doctrine, belong solely to Oral Tradition?

The true Way to measure the essential Properties of this or that Means, is by considering its Sufficiency for its End: For whatsoever is necessary to make any Means sufficient for the obtaining of its End, is

to be reputed an essential Property of that Means, SECT. I.  
 and nothing else. Now, because the End we are speaking of is the Conveyance of the knowledge of Christ's Doctrine to all those who are concerned to know it, in such a Manner as they may be sufficiently certain and secure that it hath receiv'd no change or corruption from what it was when it was first deliver'd: From hence it appears, that the Means to this End must have these two Properties: *1st.* It must be sufficiently plain and intelligible. *2dly.* It must be sufficiently certain to us, *that is,* such as we may be fully satisfied concerning it that it hath receiv'd no Corruption or Alteration. If it have these Two Conditions, it is sufficient for its End, but if it want either of them, it must necessarily fall short of its End: For if it be not plain and intelligible, it cannot convey this Doctrine to our Knowledge; if it be not certain, we cannot be assur'd, that That Doctrine which it brings down to us for the Doctrine of Christ, is really such.

§. 3. I know he assigns more Properties of this Means, which he calls *the Rule of Faith*, but upon Examination it will appear, that they either fall in with these two, or do not at all belong to it: As,

*First,* That <sup>a</sup> *it must be plain and self-evident to all,* p. 11.  
*as to its existence.* Nothing can be more frivolous than to make this a Property of any thing; because whosoever enquires into the Properties of a Thing, is supposed to be already satisfied that the Thing is.

*Secondly,* That it be <sup>b</sup> *evidenceable, as to its ruling* p. 11.  
*Power;* that is as he explains himself, <sup>c</sup> *that Men* p. 3.  
*be capable of knowing that it deserves to be relied on as a Rule.* By which he must either understand the Certainty of it; and then it falls in with the second Property I mentioned, and is the same with the Sixth which he lays down; or else he means more generally, that it is the Property of a Rule, that Men be capable of knowing that it hath the Properties of a Rule: For I understand not how a Man

PART. can know that any thing deserves to be relied on as

II. a Rule, otherwise than by knowing it hath the Properties of a Rule, *that is*, that it is sufficient for its End. But at this rate a Man may multiply the Properties of Things without End, if the Evidence of a Thing, as to its Existence, be one Property; and then, that we be capable of knowing that it is such a Thing, be another.

¶ p. 12.

§. 4. *Thirdly*, That it be<sup>d</sup> *apt to settle and justify undoubting Persons*. What he means hereby *settling undoubting Persons*, I am not able, on the sudden, to comprehend, because I understand not what unsettles a Man besides doubting; for if a Man be but so well satisfied about any Thing as to have no Doubt concerning it, I do not easily apprehend how it can be settled better, *that is*, how his Mind can be more at rest than not to doubt. But if by *undoubting Persons* he means those who do not doubt for the present, but afterwards may doubt, then I perceive what he means by *apt to settle undoubting Persons*, viz. *apt to settle Persons when they do doubt, that is*, when they are not undoubting Persons. As for *justifying undoubting Persons*, if he means that whosoever securely relies on this Rule ought of right to be acquitted, as acting rationally in so doing; this is plainly consequent upon the two Properties I have laid down: For if the Means of conveying Christ's Doctrine be sufficiently plain and certain, every Man that relies upon it is justified in so doing, because he trusts a means which is sufficient for its End.

¶ p. 12.

§. 5. *Fourthly*, That<sup>e</sup> it be *apt to satisfy fully the most sceptical Dissenters and rational Doubters*. For its aptitude to satisfy *rational Doubters*, that plainly follows from the sufficient certainty of it; but why it should be a necessary Property of a Rule of Faith, to be apt to satisfy *the most sceptical Dissenter*, I can no more divine, than I can, why he should call a *Dissenter Sceptical*, which are repugnant Terms: For a Sceptick is one who neither assents to any Thing,

nor



nor dissents; but is in a perpetual Suspense, because **SECT.**  
 he looks upon every Opinion as balanced by a con- **I.**  
 trary Opinion of equal Probability, without any In-  
 clination of the Scales either Way. But if by *the*  
*most Sceptical Dissenter* he means only a Sceptick, one  
 that doth not believe the Doctrine of Christ, nor any  
 thing else; then I would fain know what that is  
 which in Reason is apt fully to satisfy such a Person.  
 If any Thing will, sure a Demonstration will; but  
 there is no Aptitude at all in a Demonstration, to sa-  
 tisfy him who doubts whether there be any such thing  
 as a Demonstration, and likewise questions the Cer-  
 tainty of all those Principles from whence any Con-  
 clusion can be demonstrated. And those who are  
*most Sceptical*, profess to doubt of all this.

§. 6. *Fifthly*, That it <sup>a</sup> be apt to convince the most <sup>a</sup> p. 11, 12  
*obstinate and acute Adversary*. If the Rule be plain  
 and certain, the most *acute Adversary* may be con-  
 vinced by it if he will, *that is*, if he be not obstinate;  
 but if he be obstinate, *that is*, such a one as will not be  
 convinced, but will persist in his Error in Despite of all  
 Evidence that can be offered him, then I must profess  
 that I do not know any kind of Evidence that is apt to  
 convince that Man who will not be convinced by any  
 Reason that can be propounded to him. And that  
 he ought not to have expected this from any *Rule of*  
*Faith*, though never so self-evident, he might have  
 learned from the same *Author*, in whom he may find  
 his chief *Properties of the Rule of Faith*, if he had but  
 had the Patience to have considered his Explication  
 of them: I mean Dr. Holden, <sup>b</sup> who lays down the <sup>b</sup> *Analys.*  
 second Property of the *Rule of Faith*, (or, as he calls <sup>b</sup> *Fid. l. 1.*  
 it, *the Means whereby we come to the Knowledge of re-*  
*vealed Truth*) in these Words, *Another (viz. Condi-*  
*tion of this Means, &c.) is, That it be apt of its own*  
*Nature to afford the greatest true and rational Certainty,*  
*to all Men without Exception, to whom the Knowledge*  
*of it shall come; provided they be furnished with the*  
*Faculty of Reason, and have their Minds purified from*

PART. *all Passion and Lust, which do* (as he tells us, *Cap. 6.*)  
 II. *often hinder the most sagacious Persons from understand-*  
 ing the most evident and manifest Truth. Now I sup-  
 pose *Obstinacy* to be the Effects of *Passion* and *Lust*.

If Mr. S. mean, that *the Rule of Faith* must be apt to conquer *Obstinacy*, and make Men lay it aside, I cannot understand this neither; unless he mean that *the Rule of Faith* must be a *Cudgel*, which the Traditionary Church have been good at, and may use it again when Occasion serves; for none but they have a Title to it *upon a Church Account*, as Mr. S. tells us, *Corol. 10.* But setting aside *this*, I do not know any thing else that is *apt to conquer Obstinacy*: Not the clearest Reason, or the strongest Demonstration, for that I am sure is no ways fitted to combat a wilful and unreasonable Humour with any probability of Success. And if any one doubt of this, if he will but make Trial, he may easily be convinced by Experience how unapt obstinate Persons are to be convinced by Reason. I do not know any thing that ever carried greater Evidence than the Doctrine of Christ, preached by himself and his Apostles to the obstinate *Jews*, and confirmed by Multitudes of unquestionable Miracles; and yet we do not find by the Success of it, that it was so very apt to convince those that were obstinate. And no Man can judge of the Aptitude of a Means to an End, otherwise than by the usual and frequent Success of it when it is applied. Nor do I think that the Doctrine of the Gospel was ever intended for that Purpose. God hath provided no Remedy for the wilful and perverse, but he hath done that which is sufficient for the satisfying and winning over of those who are teachable and willing to learn: And such a Disposition supposeth a Man to have laid aside both *Scepticism* and *Obstinacy*.

§. 7. *Sixibly*, That<sup>e</sup> it be *certain in it self*.  
 §. 8. *Seventhly*, That<sup>d</sup> it be *absolutely ascertainable* to  
 us.

These

These *Two* are comprehended in the Second Pro-SECT. II.  
 perty I laid down; so that I have nothing to say a-  
 gainst them, but that the last looks very like a Con-  
 tradiction, *absolutely ascertainable to us*; which is to  
 say, *with respect to us, without respect to us*; for *abso-*  
*lutely* seems to exclude *Respect*, and *to us* implies  
 it.

Having thus shewn, that the Seven *Properties* he  
 mentions are either coincident with those two I  
 have laid down, or consequent upon them, or ab-  
 surd and impertinent; it remains, that the true Pro-  
 perties of a *Rule of Faith* are those Two which I first  
 named, and no more.

SECT. II. *That the Properties of a Rule of Faith  
 belong to Scripture.*

§. 1. **L**ET us now see how he endeavours to shew,  
 that these Properties agree solely to Oral  
 Tradition: He tells us there are but *Two Pretenders*  
 to this Title of being *the Rule of Faith, Scripture,*  
 and *Oral Tradition*: these *Properties* do not belong  
 to *Scripture*, and they do to *Oral Tradition*, there-  
 fore solely to it. A very good Argument, if he can  
 prove these *Two* things, *That these Two Properties do*  
*not belong to Scripture, and that they do to Oral Tradi-*  
*tion.*

§. 3. In order to the proving of the *First*, that  
 these Properties do not belong to Scripture, he pre-  
 miseth this Note, *a That we cannot by the Scriptures*  
*mean the Sense of them, but the Book, that is, such or*  
*such Characters not yet sensed or interpreted.* But why  
 can we not, by the Scriptures, mean the Sense of  
 them? He gives this clear and admirable Reason,  
 Because the Sense of the Scripture, is, *the Things to*  
*be known, and these we confess are the very points of*  
*Faith, of which the Rule of Faith is to ascertain us.*  
 Which is just as if a Man should reason thus: Those  
 who say the Statute-Book can convey to them the  
 Knowledge



PART. Knowledge of the Statute-Law, cannot by the Statute-Book mean the Sense of it, but the Book ; that is, such or such Characters not yet sensed or interpreted ; because the Sense of the Statute-Book is the Thing to be known, and these are the very Laws, the Knowledge whereof is to be conveyed to them by this Book : Which is to say, that a Book cannot convey to a Man the Knowledge of any Matter, because if it did, it would convey to him the Thing to be known. But that he may farther see what excellent Reasoning this is, I shall apply this *Paragraph* to Oral Tradition, for the Argument holds every whit as well concerning that : *To speak to them in their own Language, who say that Oral Tradition is their Rule, we must premise this Note, that they cannot mean by Oral Tradition the Sense of it, that is, the Things to be known ; for those, they confess, are the very Points of Faith, of which the Rule of Faith is to ascertain us : When they say then that Oral Tradition is the Rule of Faith, they can only mean by Oral Tradition the Words wherein it is delivered, not yet sensed or interpreted, but as yet to be sensed ; that is, such or such Sounds, with their Aptness to signify to them assuredly God's Mind, or ascertain them of their Faith ; for abstracting from the Sense and actual Signification of those Words, there is nothing imaginable left but those Sounds, with their Aptness to signify it.* When he hath answered this Argument, he will have answered his own. In the mean while, this Discourse, that he who holds the Scripture to be the Rule of Faith, must needs by the Scriptures mean a Book void of Sense, &c. because otherwise if by Scripture he should understand a Book that hath a certain Sense in it, that Sense must be the Doctrine of Christ, which is the very thing that this Book is to convey to us ; I say, this Discourse tends only to prove it an absurd Thing for any Man, that holds Scripture the Means of conveying Christ's Doctrine,

to

to understand by the Scripture a Book that conveys SECT. II.  
 Christ's Doctrine. This being his own Reason, put into plain English, I leave the Reader to judge whether it be not something short of *perfect Science and Demonstration*. Nay, if it were thoroughly examined, I doubt whether it would not fall short of that low Pitch of Science which he speaks of in his *Preface*, where he tells us, That *the Way of Science is to proceed from one Piece of Sense to another*.

§. 3. Having premised this, that by the Scriptures we must mean only dead Characters that have no Sense under them, he proceeds to shew that these dead Characters have not the Properties of a Rule of Faith belonging to them. Which although it be nothing to the Purpose when he hath shewn it, yet it is very pleasant to observe by what cross and untoward Arguments he goes about it: Of which I will give the Reader a Taste by One or Two Instances.

In the first Place he shews, that it cannot be evident to us that *these Books were written by Men divinely inspired*, because <sup>b</sup> *till the seeming Contradictions* p. 14.  
*in those Books are solved, which to do, is one of the most difficult Tasks in the World, they cannot be concluded to be of God's sending*. Now how is this an Argument against those who by the Scriptures must mean unsensed Letters and Characters? I had always thought Contradictions had been in the *Sense* of Words, not in the *Letters* and *Characters*; but I perceive he hath a peculiar Opinion, that the Four and Twenty Letters do contradict one another.

The other Instance shall be in his last Argument, which is This, that the Scripture cannot be the <sup>c</sup> *Rule of Faith*, because *those who are to be ruled and guided by the Scripture's letter to Faith, cannot be certain of the true Sense of it*: which is to say, that *unsensed Letters and Characters* cannot be the *Rule of Faith*, because the *Rule of Faith* must have a certain Sense, that is, must not be *unsensed Letters and Characters*; which in plain English p. 17.

PART II. glish amounts to thus much, unsensed Letters and Characters *cannot* be the *Rule of Faith*, that they cannot.

§. 4. And thus I might trace him through all his Properties of the *Rule of Faith*, and let the Reader see how incomparably he demonstrates the Falshood of this Protestant Tenet (as he calls it) that a senseless Book may be a *Rule of Faith*. But I am weary of pursuing him in these airy and phatastical Combats, and shall leave him to fight with his own Fancies, and batter down the Castles which himself hath built. Only I think fit to acquaint him, once for all, with a great Secret of the Protestant Doctrine, which it seems he hath hitherto been ignorant of (for I am still more confirmed in my Opinion, that he forsook our Religion before he understood it) that when they say the Scriptures are the *Rule of Faith*, or the Means whereby Christ's Doctrine is conveyed down to them, they mean by the Scriptures Books written in such Words as do sufficiently express the Sense and Meaning of Christ's Doctrine.

§. 5. And to satisfy him that we are not absurd and unreasonable in supposing the Scriptures to be such a Book, I would beg the Favour of him to grant me these Four Things, or shew Reason to the contrary.

*First*, That whatever can be spoken in plain and intelligible Words, and such as have a certain Sense, may be written in the same Words.

*Secondly*, That the same Words are as intelligible when they are written, as when they are spoken.

*Thirdly*, That God, if he please, can endite a Book in as plain Words as any of his Creatures.

*Fourthly*, That we have no Reason to think that God affects Obscurity, and envies that Men should understand him in those Things which are necessary for them to know, and which must have been written to no Purpose if we cannot understand them.

\* Luke 1. St. Luke <sup>a</sup> tells *Theophilus*, that he wrote the History of Christ to him, on Purpose to give him a certain Knowledge



Knowledge of those Things which he writ. But **SECT.**  
 how a Book which hath no *certain Sense*, should give **III.**  
 a Man *certain Knowledge of Things*, is beyond my  
 Capacity. St. *John*<sup>e</sup> saith, that he purposely com-<sup>e John 20.</sup>  
 mitted several of *Christ's* Miracles to Writing, that<sup>31.</sup>  
 Men might believe on him. But now, had Mr. S.  
 been at his Elbow, he would have advised him to  
 spare his Labour, and would have given him this  
 good Reason for it; because when he had written his  
 Book, no Body would be able to find the certain  
 Sense of it without Oral Tradition, and that alone  
 would securely and intelligibly convey both the  
 Doctrine of Christ, and the certain Knowledge of  
 those Miracles which he wrought for the Confirma-  
 tion of it. If these Four Things be but granted, I  
 see not why, when we say that the Scriptures are the  
 means of conveying to us Christ's Doctrine, we may  
 not be allow'd to understand by the Scriptures, a  
 Book which doth in plain and intelligible Words ex-  
 press to us this Doctrine.

**SECT. III.** *Mr. S's Exceptions against Scripture ex-  
 amined.*

§. I. **A**ND now, although this might have been  
 a sufficient Answer to his Exceptions a-  
 gainst the Scriptures, as being incapable of the Pro-  
 perties of a *Rule of Faith*; because all of them sup-  
 pose that which is apparently false and absurd, as  
 granted by Protestants, *viz.* That the Scriptures are  
 only a Heap of dead Letters and insignificant Cha-  
 racters, without any Sense under them; and that  
 Oral Tradition is That only which gives them Life  
 and Sense: Yet, because several of his Exceptions  
 pretend to shew, that the true Properties of a Rule  
 of Faith do not at all appertain to the Scriptures;  
 therefore I shall give particular Answers to them,  
 and, as I go along, shew that Tradition is liable to  
 all or most of those Exceptions, and to far greater  
 than those.

§. 2.

PART. §. 2. Whereas he says, <sup>a</sup> it cannot be evident to  
 II. Protestants from their Principles, that the Books of  
 Scripture were originally written by Men divinely in-  
 P. 13. spired; I will shew him that it may, and then an-  
 swer the Reasons of this Exception.

It is evident, from an universal, constant, and uncontrolled Tradition among Christians, not only Oral, but Written, and from the Acknowledgment of the greatest Adversaries of our Religion, that these Books were originally written by the Apostles and Evangelists. And this is not only a Protestant Principle, but the Principle of all mankind, *That an undoubted Tradition is sufficient Evidence of the Antiquity and Author of a Book*, and all the extrin-sical Arguments that can ordinarily be had of a Book written long ago.

Next, it is evident that the Apostles were Men divinely inspired, *that is*, secured from Error and Mistake in the writing of this Doctrine, from the Miracles that were wrought for the Confirmation of it; because it is unreasonable to imagine, that the Divine Power should so remarkably interpose for the Confirmation of a Doctrine, and give so eminent an Attestation to the Apostles to convince the World that they were immediately appointed and commissioned by God, and yet not secure them from Error in the Delivery of it. And that such Miracles were wrought, is evident from as credible Histories as we have for any of those Things which we do most firmly believe. And this is better Evidence that the Apostles were Men divinely inspired, than bare Oral Tradition can furnish us withal: For setting aside the authentick Relation of these Matters in Books, it is most probable, that Oral Tradition of it self, and without Books, would scarce have preserved the Memory of any of those particular Miracles of our Saviour and his Apostles which are recorded in Scripture. And for the Probability of

this

this I offer these Two Things to his Consideration. SECT. III.

*First*, No man can deny that memorable Persons have lived, and Actions been done in the World innumerable, whereof no History now extant makes any mention.

*Secondly*, He himself will grant, that our Saviour wrought innumerable more Miracles than are recorded in Scripture. And now I challenge him to shew the single Virtue of Oral Tradition, by giving an Account of any of those Persons, or their Actions, who lived 1500 or 2000 Years ago, besides those which are mentioned in Books; or to give a Catalogue but of Ten of those innumerable Miracles wrought by our Saviour, which are not recorded by the Evangelists, with Circumstances as punctual and particular as those are cloathed withal: If he can do this, it will be a good Evidence that Oral Tradition singly, and by it self, can do something; but if he cannot, 'tis as plain an Evidence on the contrary, that if those Actions of former times, and those Miracles of our Saviour and his Apostles which are recorded in Books, had never been written, but entrusted solely to Oral Tradition, we should have heard as little of it at this Day, as we do of those that were not written.

§. 3. Now to examine his Reasons for this Exception:

*First*, He saith, \* 'Tis most manifest that this cannot be made evident to the *Vulgar*, that Scripture was written by Men divinely inspired. This Reason is as easily answered, by saying 'tis most manifest that it can: But besides saying so, I have shewed how it may be made as evident to the *Vulgar*, as other Things which they do most firmly, and upon good Grounds, believe. Even the rudest of the *Vulgar*, and those who cannot read, do believe upon very good Grounds that there was such a King as *William the Conqueror*; and the Miracles of Christ and his



PART. his Apostles are capable of as good Evidence as we  
 II. have for this.

Secondly, He says, <sup>a</sup> this cannot be evident to the  
<sup>p. 13, 14.</sup> curious and most speculative Searchers, but by so deep  
*an Inspection into the Sense of Scripture, as shall discover such Secrets, that Philosophy and human Industry could never have arrived to.* As if we could not be assured that any Thing were written by men divinely inspired, unless it were above the Reach of human Understanding; and as if no man could know that this was our Saviour's Doctrine, *Whatever ye would that Men should do unto you, that do ye likewise unto them,* because every one can understand it. But if there were more Mysteries in the Scriptures than there are, I hope a man might be satisfied that they were written by men divinely inspired, without a clear Comprehension of all those Mysteries. The Evidence of the Inspiration of any Person doth not depend upon the Plainness or Sublimity of the Things revealed to him, but upon the goodness of the Arguments which tend to persuade us that the Person is so inspired; and the Argument that is most fit to satisfy us of that, is, if he work Miracles. Now I would gladly know why a learned man cannot be assured of a Miracle, *that is,* a plain sensible Matter of Fact done long ago, but *by so deep an Inspection into the Sense of Scripture, as shall discover such Secrets that Philosophy and human Industry could never have arrived to.*

<sup>b</sup> l. i.  
 contr.  
 Marcion.

§. Thirdly, Because <sup>b</sup> all the seeming Contradictions of Scripture must be solved, before we can out of the bare Letter conclude the Scripture to be of God's enditing; to solve which literally, plainly and satisfactory (he tells us) the Memory of so many Particulars, which made them clearer to those of the Age in which they were written, and the Matter known, must needs be so worn out by Tract of Time, that it is one of the most difficult Tasks in the World. As if we could not believe a Book to be of God's enditing, because there seem now to be some

some Contradictions in it, which we have Reason to believe could easily have been solv'd by those who liv'd in the Age in which it was written. Or as if Oral Tradition could help a man to solve these Contradictions, when the Memory of Particulars necessary for the clear Solution of them, is (as himself confesses) worn out by Tract of Time. If Mr. S. can, in order to the Solution of the seeming Contradictions of Scripture, *demonstrate*, that Oral Tradition hath to this Day preserved the Memory of those Particulars (necessary for that purpose) the Memory of which must needs be long since worn out by Tract of Time, then I will readily yield, that his Rule of Faith hath in this Particular the Advantage of *ours*. But if he cannot do this, why doth he make that an Argument against *our* Rule, which is as strong against *his own*? This is just like Captain *Everard's* Friend's Way of arguing against the *Protestants*, That they cannot rely upon Scripture, because it is full of plain Contradictions impossible to be reconciled; and therefore they ought in all Reason to submit to the *Infallibility* of the *Church*. And for an Instance of such a Contradiction, he pitched upon the Three *fourteen Generations* mentioned in the First of *St. Matthew*; because the Third *Series* of Generations, if they be counted, will be found to be but Thirteen. Not to mention now, how this Difficulty hath been sufficiently satisfied both by Protestant and Popish Commentators, without any Recourse to *Oral Tradition*; that which I take notice of, is, the Unreasonableness of making this an Exception against the Protestants, when it comes with every whit as much Force upon themselves. Suppose this Contradiction not capable of any Solution by Protestants (as he affirms) and I should submit to the Infallibility of the Church; can he assure me that Infallibility can make Thirteen, Fourteen? If it cannot, how am I nearer Satisfaction in this Point, by acknowledging the Infallibility of the Church? The Case is the very

PART II. ry same as to Mr. S's Exception; if I owned Oral Tradition, I should be never the nearer solving the seeming Contradictions of Scripture, and consequently I could not in *Reason conclude it to be of God's editing*. So that in Truth, these Exceptions, if they were true, would not strike at Protestantism, but at Christian Religion; which is the general Unhappiness of most of the Popish Arguments; than which there is no greater Evidence, that the Church of *Rome* is not the true Mother, because she had rather Christianity should be destroyed, than it should appear that any other Church hath a Claim to it. It was a work very proper for the Heretick *Marcion* to assault Religion this Way; who as *Tertullian* tells us, writ a whole Book, which he called *Antitbeses*, wherein he reckoned up all the Contradictions (as he thought) between the Old and New Testament: but methinks it is very improper for the Papists, who pretend to be the only true Christians in the World, to strain their Wits to discover as many Contradictions as they can in the Scripture, and to prove that there is no Way of reconciling them; the natural Consequence of which is, the exposing of this *sacred Instrument of our Religion*, and even *Christianity* itself, to the Scorn of Atheists. Therefore, to be very plain with Mr. S. and Captain *Everard*, I am heartily sorry to see, that one of the chief Fruits of their Conversion is to abuse the Bible.

P. 14.

§. 5. Secondly, He says • that Protestants cannot know *how many* the Books of Scripture ought to be, and *which of the many controverted ones may be securely put in that Catalogue, which not*. This he proves by saying, 'Tis most palpable, that few, or at least the rude *Vulgar*, can never be assured of it. And if this be a good Argument, this again is a good Answer, to say it is not most palpable. But I shall deal more liberally, and tell him, that we know that just so many ought to be received as uncontroverted Books, concerning which, it cannot be shewn there was ever any

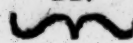


any Controversy; and so many as controverted, concerning which it appears that Question hath been made: And if those which have been controverted have been since received by those Churches which once doubted of them, there is now no farther doubt concerning them, because the Controversy about them is at an End. And now I would fain know what greater Certainty Oral Tradition can give us of the true Catalogue of the Books of Scripture: For it must either acknowledge some Books have been controverted, or not; if not, why doth he make a Supposition of controverted Books? If Oral Tradition acknowledge some to have been controverted, then it cannot assure us that they have not been controverted, nor consequently that they ought to be received as never having been controverted; but only as such, concerning which those Churches who did once raise a Controversy about them, have been since satisfied that they are Canonical. The Traditionary Church now receives the Epistle to the Hebrews as Canonical. I ask, Do they receive it as ever delivered for such? That they must, if they receive it from Oral Tradition, which conveys Things to them under this Notion, as ever delivered; and yet St. Hierom (speaking not as a Speculator, but a Testifier) saith expressly of it, *That the Custom of the Latin Church doth not receive it among the Canonical Scriptures.* What saith Mr. S. to this? It is clear from this Testimony, that the Roman Church, in St. Hierom's Time, did not acknowledge this Epistle for Canonical; and 'tis as plain that the present Roman Church doth receive it for Canonical. Where is then the Infallibility of Oral Tradition? How does the living Voice of the present Church assure us, that what Books are now received by her were ever received by her? And if it cannot do this, but the matter must come to be tried by the best Records of former Ages (which the Protestants are willing to

III.

Com. in Esai. c. 6. Ec. 8.

PART. have the Catalogue tryed by) then it seems the Pro-

II.  testants have a better way to know what Books are Canonical, than is the Infallible Way of Oral Tradition; and so long as 'tis better, no matter though it be not called infallible.

<sup>b</sup> P. 15 §. 6. *Thirdly*, He says <sup>b</sup> the Protestants cannot know, *That the very Original, or a perfectly true Copy of these Books, hath been preserved.* It is not necessary that they should know either of these; it is sufficient that they know that those Copies which they have, are not materially corrupted in any matter of Faith or Practice; and that they have sufficient Assurance of this, I have already shewn. And how doth he prove the contrary? By his usual Argument, with saying *it is manifestly impossible.* But how do the Church of *Rome* know that they have perfectly true Copies of the Scriptures in the Original Languages? They do not pretend to know this; the learned Men of that Church acknowledge the various Readings as well as we, and do not pretend to know otherwise than by probable Conjecture (as we also may do) which of those Readings is the true one. And why should it be more necessary for us to know this, than for them? If they think it reasonable to content themselves with knowing, that no material Corruptions have crept in those Books, so may we. And that there have not, we know by better Arguments than Oral Tradition, even by the Assurance we have of God's vigilant Providence, and from a moral Impossibility in the Thing, that a Book so universally dispersed, and translated into so many Languages, and constantly read in the Assemblies of Christians, should have been materially corrupted, so as that all those Copies and Translations should have agreed in those Corruptions. And this Reason

<sup>c</sup> Ep. 48. St. *Austin*<sup>c</sup> gives of the preservation of the Scriptures entire rather than any other Book; if Mr. *S.* likes it not he may call St. *Austin* to account for it.

§. 7. *Fourthly*,

§. 7. *Fourthly*, He says, ' the Protestants, at least SECT. III. ¶  
*the rudest Vulgar*, can have no assurance *that those*  
*Books are rightly translated*, because they cannot be  
 assured either of the Ability or Integrity of Tran-<sup>c</sup> P. 15.  
 slators.

*Fifthly*, Nor can they (says he) <sup>a</sup> be assured, that <sup>a</sup> p. 16,  
*the Transcribers, and Printers, and Correctors* of the 17.

Press, have carefully and faithfully done their Part,  
 in transcribing and printing the several Copies and  
 Translations of Scripture aright; because *they only*  
*can have Evidence of the right Letter of Scripture, who*  
*stood at their Elbows attentively watching they should*  
*not err in making it perfectly like a former Copy; and*  
*even then, why might they not mistrust their own Eyes*  
*and Aptness to oversee?* I put these Two Exceptions  
 together, because the same Answer will serve them  
 both. The Grounds of these Exceptions, if they  
 have any, are these: That no Man is to be trusted  
 either for his Skill or Honesty; And, that it is dan-  
 gerous for Men to trust their own Eyes. Unless  
 both these be true, these Exceptions are of no Force:  
 For if we can be assured that other Men have suffici-  
 ent Skill in any thing which we our selves do not suf-  
 ficiently understand, we may be assured that those  
 who translated the Bible had Skill in the Original  
 Languages; because very credible Persons tell us so,  
 and we have no Reason to doubt their Testimony in  
 this Particular, more than in any other Matter. So  
 that if we can have sufficient Assurance of Mens In-  
 tegrity in any thing, we have no Reason to doubt of  
 the Skill of Translators, Transcribers, or Printers;  
 And if we can have no Assurance of Mens Integrity  
 in any thing, then no Man can be assured there was  
 such a Man as *Henry the Eighth*; and yet I hope the  
 Church of *Rome* makes no doubt of it: Nor can any  
 Man be assured there is such a City as *Rome*, who  
 hath not seen it! nay, if he have, <sup>b</sup> *why may he not* p. 16.  
*mistrust his own Eyes?* And, which is the saddest In-  
 convenience of all, if no Body be to be trusted, nor



PART  
II.

*Mens own Eyes*, (and for the same Reason, sure not their *Ears*) what becomes of the Infallibility of *Oral and practical Tradition*? Which necessarily supposeth a competent Understanding, a faithful Memory, an honest Mind, in the Generality of those who delivered Christ's Doctrine down to us: And by what means soever a Man can be assured of these, by the same he may much more easily be assured of the Ability and Integrity of Translators, Transcribers, and Printers. But above all, it supposeth that *Mens Ears and Eyes* cannot deceive them in those Things which they are taught to see practised.

Is it not very pretty to see what pitiful Shifts Men that serve an *Hypothesis* are put to? When, to maintain *Infallibility*, they are forced to run to the *Extremities of Scepticism* and to defend the Certainty of Oral Tradition (which depends upon the Certainty of *Mens Senses*, and an Assurance of the Ability and Integrity of those who are dead fifteen hundred Years before we were born) are glad to take Refuge in Principles quite contrary; such as these, That we can have no Assurance, but that whole Professions of Men <sup>c</sup> *might hap to be Knaves*; that we can have no sufficient Evidence that any Man made his *Copy perfectly like the Former*, unless <sup>d</sup> *we stood at his Elbow attentively watching him*: Nay, and if we did so, we have still Reason to distrust our Senses. In short, all Human Faith supposeth Honesty among Men; and that for Matters of Fact and plain Objections of Sense, the general and uncontrolled Testimony of Mankind is to be credited; and for Matters of peculiar Skill and Knowledge, that the Generality of those who are accounted skilful in that kind are to be relied upon: For, as *Aristotle* well observes, there is no greater Sign of an *undisciplin'd Wit*, (or, to use <sup>e</sup> Preface. one of Mr. S's fine Phrases <sup>e</sup>, of a Man *not acquainted with the Paths of Science*) than to expect greater Evidence for Things than they are capable of. Every  
Man

Man hath Reason to be assured of a Thing which is SECT. capable of sufficient Evidence, when he hath as much III. Evidence for it as the Nature of that Thing will bear, and as the Capacity he is in will permit to him have; and, as Mr. *White* says well, <sup>a</sup> *Satisfaction is* Answer to be given to every one, according to his Capacity; it to the Lord is sufficient for a Child to believe his Parents, for a Faulkland Clown to believe his Preacher. And this is universally true in all Cases where we have not better or equal Evidence to the contrary. But such is the Unhappiness of the Popish Doctrines, that if People were permitted the free use of the Scripture, they would easily discern them to have no probable Foundation in it, and to be plainly contrary to it; so that it cannot be safe for their Preachers to tell the People that the Scripture is the only *Rule of Faith*, lest they should find Cause not to believe them when they teach Doctrines so plainly contrary to that Rule.

§. 8. *Lastly*, He says, <sup>b</sup> the Protestants cannot be certain of the true Sense of Scripture. Does he mean of plain Texts, or obscure ones? Of the true Sense of plain Texts I hope every one may be certain; and for obscure ones, it is not necessary every one should. But it may be there are no plain Texts in the Scriptures; then the Reason of it must be (till Mr. S. can shew a better) either because it is impossible for any one to write plainly, or because God cannot write so plainly as Men; or because we have good Reason to think that he would not write things necessary for every one to believe, so as men might clearly understand him.

But he tells us, <sup>c</sup> *The numerous Comments upon* Scripture are an evidence that no man can be certain of the true Sense of it. I hope not; for if those numerous Commentators do generally agree in the Sense of plain Text; (as 'tis certain they do) then this Argument signifies nothing as to such Texts; and as for those which are *obscure*, let Commentators differ

PART

II.

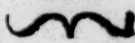
P. 17.

Hom.  
32. de  
Consub-  
stant.

Hom. 7.  
de Sancto  
Phoca.

differ about them as much as they please, so long as all necessary points of Faith and matters of Practice are delivered in plain Texts. He adds, <sup>a</sup> *There are infinite Disputes about the Sense of Scripture, even in the most concerning Points, as in that of Christ's Divinity.* But are not Commentators, both Protestant and Popish, generally agreed about the Sense of Scripture in that Point? And what if some out of Prejudice do mistake, or out of Perverseness do wrest the plainest Texts of Scripture for the Divinity of Christ, to another Sense? Is this any Argument that those Texts are not sufficiently plain? Can any thing be spoken or written in Words so clear from Ambiguity, which a perverse or prejudiced mind shall not be able to vex and force to another meaning? God did not write the Scriptures for the Froward and the Captious, but for those who will read them with a free and unprejudiced mind, and are willing to come to the Knowledge of the Truth. If Mr. S. had been conversant in the Writings of the Fathers, he could not but have taken notice with what Confidence they attempted to prove the Divinity of Christ out of Scripture, as if that did afford convincing Arguments for this Purpose. St. Chrysostom <sup>b</sup> professes to demonstrate out of Scripture, *That the Son is of the same Substance with the Father*; and relies upon Scripture alone for this, without mentioning any other kind of Argument: So that it seems St. Chrysostom was not acquainted with the Insufficiency of Scripture for the Conviction of Hereticks in this Point; and that he was either ignorant of the (*infallible*) Way of demonstrating this Point from Oral Tradition, or had no great Opinion of it. The same Father elsewhere, <sup>c</sup> arguing against Hereticks about the Divinity of Christ, says, *That they pervert the Scriptures, to strengthen their Heresy from thence.* But then he does not (with Mr. S.) blame the Scripture, and say that this Doctrine is not there delivered with sufficient Clearness;



Clearness; but contrarywise he says, *That the Scrip-  
ture is clear enough, but the corrupt Minds of Here-  
ticks will not see what is there contain'd.* Had St.  **SECT. III.**  
*Chrysostom* been a true Son of the Traditionary  
Church, he would have laid hold of this Occasion to  
vilify the Scriptures, and to shew the Necessity of re-  
gulating our Faith not by such uncertain *Records*,  
but by the infallible *Reports* of Oral Tradition.

§. 9. But because Mr. S. lays great Weight (in  
several Parts of this Book) upon this Exception a-  
gainst Scripture, viz. *That Protestants cannot be cer-  
tain of the true Sense of it*, therefore I shall not con-  
tent my self, only to have shewn that we may be  
sufficiently certain of the Sense of Scripture, so far  
as to understand all necessary Matters of Faith and  
Practice, and that more, than this is not necessary;  
but shall likewise return this Exception upon him,  
by enquiring into these two Things;

1. How the Traditionary Church can be more  
certain of the true Sense of Scripture than the Pro-  
testants?

2. How they can be more certain of the true Sense  
of Tradition, than Protestants of the true Sense of  
Scripture?

1. How the *Traditionary Church* can be more cer-  
tain of the true Sense of Scripture than *Protestants*?  
*They* pretend to have an Oral Tradition of the  
true Sense of it, delivered down from Father to Son.  
But this only reacheth to those Texts which are coin-  
cident with the main Body of Christian Doctrine;  
as for all other Parts of Scripture, they are as useless  
to Papists, as they suppose they are to us; because  
wanting the Help of Oral Tradition, they cannot  
be certain of one Tittle of them. And as for those  
Texts, the Sense whereof is conveyed down by Oral  
Tradition; this Sense is, I hope, delivered in some  
Words or other: And have all Preachers, and Fa-  
thers, and Mothers, and Nurses, the Faculty of de-  
livering

**PART** livering this Sense in Words so plain as cannot possibly be mistaken or wrested to another Sense? I am sorry that when every one hath this Faculty of speaking their Thoughts plainly, the Holy Ghost should be represented as not able to convey his Mind to Men in intelligible Words. And does not his own Objection rebound upon himself? If the Church have a certain Sense of Scripture orally delivered, whence are the numerous Comments of the Fathers upon it, and of later Writers of their Church, and the infinite Disputes about the Sense of it, in the most concerning Points? *viz. The Efficacy of God's Grace, the Supremacy of Saint Peter, the Infallibility of a Pope and Council by immediate Assistance of the Holy Ghost?* What a Stir is made about the Sense of *Dabo tibi Claves, Tu es Petrus, & super hanc Petram, &c. Pasce oves?* Do not they differ about the Meaning of these Texts among themselves, as much as they do from the Fathers, and from the Protestants? Some understanding them of St. Peter's Supremacy only, others of his Infallibility, others of his Infallibility only in and with a General Council; which yet others do not allow to Pope or Council from any immediate Assistance, but only from the rational Force of Tradition; supposing that the Pope and Council hold to it. If Oral Tradition have brought down a certain Sense of these Texts, why do they not produce it, and agree in it? If it have not (to use a hot Phrase of his own \* 'Tis perfect Phrenzy to say they can be certain of the true Sense of Scripture.

p. 17.

If he say, they are by Tradition made certain of the true Sense of Scripture, *so far as it concerns the main Body of Christian Doctrine*, and do all agree in it, and that is sufficient; then I ask him, What are those Points of Faith which make up the Body of Christian Doctrine? He will tell me, they are those which all Catholicks agree to have descended to them from the Apostles by a constant and uninterrupted

rupted Tradition. I enquire farther, how I shall know what is the certain Sense of Scripture so far as it concerns these Points? He must answer as before, *that that is the true Sense which all Catholicks agree to have descended to them by Tradition.* Which amounts to this, that *all* Catholicks do agree in the Sense of Scripture so far as they do *all* agree in it. It is to be hoped, that the Protestants (how much soever at present they differ about the Sense of Scripture) may in Time come to as good an Agreement as this. This brings to my Remembrance a Passage or two of Mr. Cressy; the one in his *Appendix*,<sup>b</sup> when he tells us, *That as it is impossible that Hereticks should agree any other way than in Fac-tion; so it is impossible that Catholicks should differ in Points of Faith.* Why so? Were not those Catholicks first, who afterwards became Hereticks? And when they become so, did they not differ in Points of Belief? Yes; but here lies the Conceit, When they began to differ, then they ceas'd to be Catholicks; therefore Catholicks can never differ in Points of Faith. The other Passage is where he says, *'That he hath forsaken a Church where Unity was impossible, &c. and betaken himself to a Church where Schism is impossible.* This last Clause, *That Schism is impossible in their Church*, cannot possibly be true but in the same absurd and ludicrous Sense, in which it is impossible for Catholicks to differ in Points of Belief. For he cannot deny but that it is possible for Men to break off from the Communion of their Church, which in his Sense is Schism. But here is the Subtilty of it, No Schismatick is of their Church, because so soon as he is a Schismatick he is out of it; therefore Schism is impossible in their Church. And is it not as impossible in the Church of *England*; Where Mr. Cr. might have done well to have continued, till he could have given a wiser Reason of forsaking her.

§. 10. But to return to our Purpose. Mr. *Rushworth*<sup>d</sup> acknowledgeth, that the Scripture is of it<sup>d</sup> Dial. 2. self Sect. 12.

SECT. III.

Exomolog.

log. 2d.

Edit. p.

554.

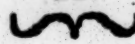
Exomolog.

log. c. 53.

Sect. 3.

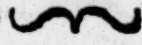


PART. self sufficiently plain as to matters of Practice ;

II.  for he asks, *Who is so blind as not to see that these Things are to be found in Scripture by a sensible, common, and discreet reading of it ; though perhaps by a rigorous and exact balancing of every particular Word and Syllable, any of these Things would vanish away we know not how ?* So that for the Direction of our Lives and Actions, he confesseth the Scripture to be sufficiently plain, if Men will but read it *sensibly* and *discreetly* ; and (he says) that he is blind that does not see this. But who so blind as he that *will* not see, that the Sense of Scripture is as plain in all necessary Points of Faith ? I am sure St. *Austin* makes

• De Doctr. no Difference, when he tells us, ° That in those  
Christ. 1. Things which are plainly set down in Scripture, we  
2. may find all those Things in which Faith and Manners of Life are comprehended. And why cannot Men, in reference to Matters of Faith as well as of Practice, read the Scriptures *sensibly* and *discreetly*, without such a *rigorous balancing of every Word and Syllable*, as will make the Sense *vanish away we know not how ?* If the Scripture be but sufficiently plain to such as will use it *sensibly* and *discreetly*, I do not understand what greater Plainness can be desir'd in a Rule ; nor can I imagine what kind of Rule it must be that can be unexceptionably plain to captious Cavillers, and such as are bent to play the fool with it.

Well, suppose the Scriptures be not sufficiently clear as to Matter of Faith, and hereupon I have Recourse to the Church for the true Sense of Scripture ; must I believe the Church's Sense to be the true Sense of such a Text, though I see it to be plainly contrary to the genuine Sense of the Words ? Yes, that I must, or else I make my self, and not the Church, judge of the Sense of Scripture, which is the grand Heresy of the Protestants. But then I must not suppose, much less believe, that the Church's Sense of such a Text is contrary to the genuine meaning

meaning of it ; no, although I plainly see it to be SECT. III.  
 so : This is hard again on the other Hand ; especially if that be true which is acknowledged both by   
 Dr. Holden and Mr. Cressy, viz. That tho' General Councils cannot mistake in the Points of Faith which they decree, yet they may mistake in the Confirmation of them from Texts of Scripture, that is, they may be mistaken about the Sense of those Texts. And if Mr. S. think his Brethren have granted too much, he may see this exemplified in the second Council of Nice (to mention no other) which, to establish their Doctrine of Image-worship, does so palpably abuse and wrest Texts of Scripture, that I can hardly believe that any Papist in the World hath the Forehead to own That for the true Sense of those Texts which is there given by those Fathers.

§. II. Secondly, How the Traditionary Church can be more certain of the true Sense of their Traditional Doctrines, than the Protestants can be of the true Sense of Scripture ? And this is worthy of our Enquiry, because if the Business be search'd to the Bottom, it will appear (besides all other Inconveniences, which Oral Tradition is much more liable to than Scripture) that the certain Sense and Meaning of Traditional Doctrine is as hard to come at as the Sense of Scripture. And this I will make appear by necessary Consequence from their own Concessions. Mr. White and Mr. S. say, that the great Security of Tradition is this, that it is not tied to certain Phrases and set Forms of Expression, but the same Sense is conveyed and settled in Mens Hearts by various Expressions. But according to Mr. Rushworth, This renders Tradition's Sense uncertain ; for he says, *'Tis impossible to put fully, and* Dial. 2.  
*beyond all quarrel the same Sense in divers Words.* Sect. 6. So  
 that if Men do not receive Tradition in a *sensible, common, discreet* Way, (as Mr. Rushworth speaks concerning reading the Scriptures) but will come to  
a

PART *a rigorous and exact ballancing of every particular*

II. *Phrase, Word and Syllable, the Sense of Tradition*

*will be in the very same Danger of Uncertainty, and be liable to vanish we know not how. Dr. Holden*

*Analys.*

*Fidei l. 1.*

*c. 9.*

*lays down these two Principles, First, That no Truth can be conveyed down from Man to Man but by Speech; and Speech cannot be but by Words; and all Words are either equivocal in themselves, or liable to be differently understood by several Persons: Secondly, That such is the Frame of Man's Mind that the same Truths may be differently apprehended and understood by different Persons: And if this be true, then Traditional Doctrines, if they be delivered by Speech and Words, will be liable to Uncertainties and Ambiguities, as*

*b Append.*

*c. 6.*

*to their Sense as well as Scripture. Mr. Gressy<sup>b</sup> tells us, That Reason and Experience shew, that Differences will arise even about the Writings of the Fathers, and any thing but the Testimony of the present Church. If this be true, Tradition wholly falls into Uncertainty: For if Difference will arise about the Writings of the Fathers how they are to be interpreted, I suppose the Writings of Councils will be liable to the same Inconvenience: And if the whole present Church cannot declare her Sense of any Traditional Doctrine otherwise than by a Council (unless with the Jesuits they will epitomize the Church into the Pope) and the Decrees of a Council cannot be universally dispersed (or at least never use to be) but by Writing: And if Differences will arise about the Interpretation of that Writing, as well as any other, then this present infallible Authority (which Mr. Gressy magnifies so much for ending of Differences) leaves all Controversies arising about the Sense of Tradition as indeterminate as ever; and they must for ever remain so, till general Councils have got the Knack of penning their Decrees in Words which will so infallibly express their Meaning to the most captious Caviller, that no Difference can possibly arise about the Interpretation of them; or else (which will be more suitable*



able to this wise *Hypothesis*) till general Councils SECT.  
(being convinced by Mr. S's *Demonstrations*) shall **III.**  
come to understand themselves so well, as not to en-  
trust their Decrees any more to the *uncertain* Way of  
*Writing*, but for the future to communicate them  
to the World by the *infallible* Way of *Oral Tradition*.

And to mention no more, Mr. Knott, \* (who agrees<sup>a</sup> Answer  
with the other thus far, that the certain Sense of to Chillin.  
Scripture is only to be had from the Church) speaks<sup>c.</sup> 2. Sect.

to this Purpose, That before we can be certain that  
this is the true Sense of such a Text, we must either  
be certain that this Text is capable of no other Sense,  
as *Figurative*, *Mystical*, or *Moral*; or if it be, we  
must have *some certain and infallible Means to know in*  
*which of them it is taken, which can be known only by*  
*Revelation*. If this be true, then by a fair Parity of  
Reason, before I can be certain that this is the Sense  
of a Doctrinal Tradition delivered down to me, I  
must either be certain that the Words in which this  
Tradition was expressed when it was delivered to  
me, are capable of no other Sense (as *Figurative*,  
*Mystical* or *Moral*) besides that in which I under-  
stood them; or if they be (as certainly they will be)  
capable of any of these other Senses, then must I  
have some certain and infallible Means whereby to  
know in which of these they are taken: And this  
can no more be known without a Revelation, than  
which is the true Sense of such a Text of Scripture.  
If it be said, that the Sense of a Traditionary Doctrine  
may by different Expressions be still farther and farther  
explained to me till I come certainly to understand  
the Sense of it; this will not help the Matter: For  
if these kinds of Cavils be good, that a Man can-  
not be certain of the Meaning of any Words, till  
he can by an infallible Argument demonstrate either  
that they cannot be taken, or that they are not ta-  
ken in any other Sense; I say, if this Cavil will  
hold, then every new Expression, whereby any one  
shall endeavour to explain any Traditional Doctrine,

is

PART. is liable to the same Inconvenience which those

II. Words in which it was first delivered to me were liable to. From all which is evident, that the Traditional Church can be no more certain of the Sense of their Traditional Doctrines, than Protestants may be of the Sense of Scripture.

§. 12. These are his Exceptions contained in his *Second Discourse*; and of what Force they are, hath been examined. But because he foresaw that it might be replied, that these Defects might in part be provided against by *History*, by the *Providence of God*, by *Testimonies of Councils and Fathers*, and by the *sufficient Clearness of Scripture as to the Fundamentals*; he endeavours to shew that these signify little to this purpose.

¶ P. 17, 18. *First*, Not *History* \* because few are skilled in *History*; and they that are not, cannot safely rely upon those that are skilled, unless they knew certainly that the *Historians* whom they rely on had *secure Grounds*, and not bare *Hear-say* for what they writ, and that they were not contradicted by others either extant or perished. How much Credit is to be given to uncontrolled *History* by the *Learned*, and how much by the *Vulgar* to Men of Skill, I have already shewn. I shall only add now, that if this Reasoning be true, it is impossible for any Man to be certain by *History* of any ancient Matter of Fact, as namely, that there were such Persons as *Julius Cæsar* and *William the Conqueror*, and that they invaded and conquered *England*, because (according to him) we cannot know certainly that the *Historians*, who relate these Things, and upon whose Authority we rely, had *secure Grounds*, and not bare *Hear-say*, for what they writ: And that they were not contradicted by others either extant or perished, is, I am sure, impossible for any Man to know: For who can tell now what was contained in those Books which are perished? So that if this be requisite to make every *Historical Relation* credible, to know certainly that it was not

con-

contradicted by any of those Books which we do not know what they were, nor what was in them, we can have no Certainty of any ancient Fact or History; for who knows certainly that some Books that are perished did not contradict whatever is written in Books that are extant? Nay if this Reasoning hold, we can have no Certainty of any Thing conveyed by Oral Tradition: For what tho' the Priest tell me this was the Doctrine of Christ delivered to him? Unless I know that all others agree with him in his Tradition, I cannot rely upon this Testimony: Nor then neither, in Mr. Knott's Opinion, because *the Testimony of Preachers or Pastors is human and fallible*, unless (according to his Jargon) a Conclusion, deduced from *Premisses*, one of which is only *probable*, and may be sufficient to bring our Understanding to an *infallible Act of Faith*, viz. *if such a Conclusion be taken specificative*; whereas if it be taken *reduplicative*, as it is a Conclusion, it can only beget a *probable Assent*; which is to say, that considered barely as a Conclusion, and so far as in Reason it can deserve Assent, it is only probable; but considered as it serves an *Hypothesis*, and is convenient to be believed with Reason or without, so it is infallible. But to carry the Supposition farther: Put the Case, that the whole present Age assembled in a general Council, should declare that such a Point was delivered to them; yet (according to Mr. S.) we cannot safely rely upon this, unless we knew certainly, that those whom they relied on *had secure Grounds, and not bare Hear-say, for what they delivered; and that they were not contradicted* within the Space of 1500 Years by any of those that are dead; which it is impossible for any one now to know.

But to shew how inconsistent he is with himself in these Matters, I will present the Reader with a *passage* or *Two* in another Part of his Book, where he endeavours to prove that Men may safely rely on a general and uncontrolled Tradition. He tells us,

VOL. III.

N

That

\* Answ. to  
Chilling.c.  
1. Sect. 33.

III.



PART. <sup>a</sup> *That the common Course of human Conversation makes it*

II. *madness not to believe great Multitudes of Knowers, if no possible Considerations can awaken in our Reason a Doubt*

<sup>a</sup> P. 49. *that they conspire to deceive us. And a little after,*

<sup>e</sup> Ibid. *Nor can any, unless their Brains rove wildly, or be un-*

*settled even to the Degree of Madness, suspect Deceit, where such Multitudes agree unanimously in a matter of Fact.*

*Now if Men be but supposed to write, as well as to speak, what they know, and to agree in their Writings about matter of Fact; then it will be the*

*same Madness not to believe Multitudes of Historians, where no possible Consideration can awaken in our Reason a Doubt that they have conspired to deceive us; and Mens Brains must rove wildly, and be unsettled even to the*

*Degree of Phrenzy, who suspect Deceit where such Multitudes unanimously agree in a Matter of Fact.*

*And this seems to me to be the great Unhappiness of Mr. S's Demonstrations, that they proceed upon contradictory Principles; so that in order to the demonstrating of the Uncertainty of Books and Writings, he must suppose all those Principles to be uncertain, which he takes to be self-evident and unquestionable, when he is to demonstrate the Infallibility of Oral Tradition.*

<sup>a</sup> P. 38.

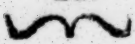
§. 13. *Secondly, He tells us* <sup>a</sup> *the Providence of God is no Security against those Contingences the the Scriptures are subject to; because we cannot be certain of Divine Providence or Assistance to his Church, but by Letter of Scripture; therefore that must be first proved certain, before we mention the Church, or God's Assistance to her. As if we pretend there were any Promise in Scripture that God would preserve the Letter of it entire and uncorrupted, or as if we could not otherwise be assured of it; as if the Light of natural Reason could not assure us of God's Providence in General, and of his more especial Care of those Things which are of greatest Concernment to us, such as this is, That a Book contain-*  
ing

ing the Method and the Terms of Salvation should be preserved from any material Corruption. He might as well have said, That without the Letter of Scripture we cannot know that there is a God. SECT. III.

§. 14. *Thirdly*, Nor (says he <sup>b</sup>) can Testimonies <sup>p. 18,</sup> of *Councils and Fathers* be sufficient Interpreters of Scripture. We do not say they are. Our Principle is, that the Scripture doth sufficiently interpret it self, that is, is plain to all Capacities, in Things necessary to be believed and practised. And the general consent of Fathers in this Doctrine of the sufficient Plainness of Scripture (which I shall afterwards shew) is a good Evidence against them. As for obscure and more doubtful Texts, we acknowledge the Comments of the *Fathers* to be a good Help, but no certain Rule of Interpretation. And that the Papists think so, as well as we, is plain: inasmuch as they acknowledge the Fathers to differ among themselves in the interpretation of several Texts; And nothing is more familiar in all Popish Commentators, than to differ from the ancient Fathers about the Sense of Scripture. And as for *Councils*, Dr. Holden and Mr. Cressy (as I said before) do not think it necessary to believe that always to be the true Sense of Texts which Councils give of them, when they bring them to confirm Points of Faith. Nay, if any Controversy arise about the Sense of any Text of Scripture, it is impossible (according to Mr. Rushworth's Principles) for a Council to decide either that, or any other Controversy: For he <sup>c</sup> makes it <sup>Dial. 2.</sup> his Business to prove, That Controversies cannot be <sup>Sect. 8.</sup> decided by Words; and if this be so, then they cannot be decided at all, unless he can prove that they may be decided without Words, and consequently that Councils may do their Work best in the Quakers Way by silent Meetings.

§. 15. *Fourthly*, Nor can (says he <sup>d</sup>) the *Clearness* <sup>p. 10,</sup> of Scripture as to Fundamentals, be any help against these Defects. Why not?

PART. First, because a certain Catalogue of Fundamentals

II. was never given and agreed to by sufficient Authority,  
 and yet without this all goes to wreck. I hope not, so

<sup>c</sup> Prefat.

long as we are sure that God would make nothing necessary to be believed but what he hath made plain; and so long as Men do believe all Things that are plainly revealed (which is every one's Fault if he do not) Men may do well enough without a precise Catalogue. But suppose we say, that the Articles of the Apostles Creed contain all necessary matters of simple Belief; what hath Mr. S. to say against this? I am sure the *Roman Catechism*, set forth by the Decree of the Council of Trent, says • as much as this comes to; viz. *That the Apostles having received a Command to preach the Gospel to every Creature, thought fit to compose a Form of Christian Faith, namely to this End, that they might all think and speak the same things, and that there might be no Schisms among those whom they had called to the Unity of Faith, but that they might all be perfect in the same Sense and the same Opinion: And this Profession of the Christian Faith and Hope, so framed by them, the Apostles called the Symbol or Creed.* Now how this End of bringing Men to Unity of Faith, and making them perfectly of the same Sense and Opinion, could probably be attained by means of the Creed, if it did not contain all necessary Points of Simple Belief, I can by no means understand. Besides, a certain Catalogue of Fundamentals is as necessary for them as for us; and when Mr. S. gives in his, ours is ready. Mr. *Chillingworth* had a great desire to have seen Mr. *Knott's* Catalogue of Fundamentals, and challenged him to produce it, and offered him very fairly, that whenever he might with one Hand receive his, he would with the other deliver his own: But Mr. *Knott*, though he still persisted in the same Demand, could never be prevailed with to bring forth his own, but kept it for a Secret to his dying Day. But to put a final  
 Stop



Stop to this *canting Demand of a Catalogue of Fundamentals* (which I perceive I shall never be able to do, because it is one of those expletive Topicks which Popish Writers, especially those of the lowest Form, do generally make use of to help out a Book) however, to do what I can towards the stopping of it, I desire Mr. S. to answer the Reasons whereby his Friend Dr. Holden<sup>a</sup> shews the Unreasonableness<sup>a</sup> of this Demand, and likewise endeavours to prove that such a *Catalogue* would not only be *useless* and *pernicious* if it could be given, but that it is *manifestly impossible* to give such a precise Catalogue. SECT. III.

Secondly, He asks, <sup>b</sup> *Is it a Fundamental that Christ is God?* If so, *Whether this be clearer in Scripture, than that God hath Hands, Feet, &c.* To which I answer by another Question, Is it clear that there are Figures in Scripture, and that many things are spoken after the manner of Men, and by way of Condescension and Accommodation to our Capacities; and that Custom and common Sense teacheth Men to distinguish between Things figuratively and properly spoken? If so, why cannot every one easily understand, that when the Scripture saith *God hath Hands and Feet*, and that *Christ is the Vine and the Door*, these are not to be taken properly, as we take this Proposition, that Christ is God, in which no Man hath any Reason to suspect a Figure? When Mr. S. tells us, That *he preacheth upon the specifical Nature of things*, would it not offend him, if any one should be so silly as to conclude from hence that Mr. S. believed *himself* to be a *Bird*, and *Nature a Perch*? And yet not only the Scriptures but all sober Writers, are free from such forc'd and fantastical Metaphors. I remember that *Origen*<sup>c</sup> taxeth *Celsus's* wilful Ignorance in finding fault with the Scriptures, for "attributing to God Human Affections, as Anger, &c. and tells him, that any one who had a mind to understand the Scriptures, might easily

PART. “ easily see, that such Expressions were accommo-

II. “ dated to *us*, and accordingly to be understood;

“ and that no Man, that will but compare these  
“ Expressions with other Passages of Scripture,  
“ need to fail of the true sense of them.” But ac-

According to Mr. *S. Origen* was to blame to find fault  
with *Celsus* for thinking that the Scripture did  
really attribute Human Affections to God; for how  
could he think otherwise, when *the most fundamental*  
*Point is not clearer in Scripture, than that God hath*  
*Hands, Feet, &c.* How could *Origen* in reason expect  
from *Celsus* (though never so great a Philosopher) that  
he should be able, without the Help of Oral tradi-  
tion, to distinguish between what is spoken *literally*,

“ Hæret. and what by a certain *Scheme* of Speech? *Theodoret*  
Fabul. l. 4. tells us of one *Audeus*, who held that God had a  
Human Shape, and bodily Members; but *he* does  
not say that the Reason of this Error was because he  
made Scripture the Rule of his Faith, but expressly  
because *he was a Fool, and did foolishly understand*  
*those things which the Divine Scriptures speak by way*  
*of Condescension.* So that although Mr. *S.* is pleas’d  
to make this wise Objection, yet it seems (according to  
*Theodoret*) that Men do not mistake such Texts either  
for want of Oral Tradition or of sufficient Clearness  
in the Scriptures, but for want of common Reason and  
Sense. And if Mr. *S.* know of any Rule of Faith  
that is secure from all Possibility of being mistaken  
by foolish and perverse men, I would be glad to be  
acquainted with it, and with him for its sake.

SECT. IV. *That Scripture is a sufficient Rule to the*  
*Unlearned, and to the most rational Doubters.*

§. I. **I**N his next Discourse he endeavours to shew,  
that unlearned Persons cannot be justified as  
acting rationally in receiving the Scripture for the  
Word of God, and relying upon it as a certain  
Rule; because they are not capable of Satisfaction  
concerning these matters. But I have already shewn  
that

that they are, and shall not repeat the same over again. And whereas he says, <sup>a</sup> That *several Professions all pretend to Scripture, and yet differ, and damn, and persecute one another* about these Differences; the Answer is easy: That they all pretend to Scripture, is an Argument that they all acknowledge it to be the Word of God, and *the Rule of Faith*; and that they are generally agreed about the Sense of those plain Texts which contain the fundamental Points of Faith, is evident in that those several Professions acknowledge the Articles contained in the Apostles Creed to be sufficiently delivered in Scripture: And if any Professions differ about the meaning of plain Texts, that is not an Argument that plain Texts are obscure, but that some Men are perverse. And if those Professions damn and persecute one another about the meaning of obscure Texts, the Scripture is not in fault, but those that do so.

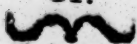
§. 2. And whereas he pretends, <sup>b</sup> That the <sup>p. 25.</sup> Scripture is not able to satisfy sceptical Dissenters and <sup>26, 27.</sup> rational Doubters, because nothing under a Demonstration can satisfy such Persons so well concerning the Incorruptedness of Originals, the Faithfulness of Translations, &c. but that searching and sincere Wits may still maintain their Ground of Suspence with a Might it not be otherwise? This hath been answered already partly by shewing that the Scripture was not intended to satisfy Scepticks, and that a Demonstration is not sufficient to give Satisfaction to them; and partly by shewing that rational Doubters may have as much Satisfaction concerning those Matters, as the Nature of the Thing will bear; and he is not a rational Doubter that desires more.

But that he may see the Unreasonableness of this Discourse, I shall briefly shew him, That all Mankind do in matters of this Nature accept of such Evidence as falls short of Demonstration; and that his great *Friends* and *Masters*, from whom he hath



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II.



taken the main Grounds of his Book (tho' he manageth them to less Advantage) do frequently acknowledge, that it is reasonable for Men to acquiesce in such Assurance as falls short of Infallibility, and such Evidence as is less than Demonstration. Do not Mankind think themselves sufficiently assured of the Antiquity and Authors of several Books, for which they have not demonstrative Evidence? Doth not *Aristotle* say, that Things of a moral and civil Nature, and matters of Fact done long ago, are incapable of Demonstration; and that it is madness to expect it for Things of this Nature? Are there no Passages in Books so plain, that a Man may be sufficiently satisfied that this and no other is the certain Sense of them? If there be none, can any Thing be *spoken* in plainer Words than it may be *written*? If it cannot, how can we be satisfied of the certain Sense of any Doctrine orally delivered? And if we cannot be so satisfy'd, where's the Certainty of Oral Tradition? But if Books may be written so plainly as that we may be abundantly satisfied that this is the certain Sense of such and such Passages, then we may reasonably rest satisfied in Evidence for these matters short of Demonstration. For was ever the Sense of any Words so plain as that there did not remain *this Ground of Suspence*, that those Words might be capable of another Sense?

\* Dialog. Mr. *Rusworth* \* says, that *disputative Scholars* do find  
z. Sect. 7. Means daily to explicate the plainest Words of an Author to a quite different Sense: And that the World might be furnish'd with an advantageous Instance

\* De bonis of the Possibility of this, *Raynaudus* \* (a Writer of  
& malis li- their own) hath made a wanton Experiment upon  
bris. the Apostles Creed, and by a sinister (but possible) Interpretation, hath made every Article of it Heresy and Blasphemy, on purpose to shew that the plainest Words are not free from Ambiguity. But may be Mr. S. canout do the Apostles, and can deliver the Christian Doctrine so clearly, that he can demon-

demonstrate it impossible for any Man to put any SECT. other Sense upon any of his Words than that which IV. he intended. I do not know what may be done; but if Mr. S. doth this he must both amend his Style and his Way of Demonstration.

Is Mr. S. sufficiently assured that there is such a Part of the World as *America*? And can he demonstrate this to any man without carrying him thither? Can he shew by any necessary Argument, that it is naturally impossible that all the Relations concerning that Place should be false? When his Demonstrations have done their utmost, cannot *a* p. 27. *searching and sincere Wit at least maintain his Ground of Suspence with a Might it not be otherwise*? And, with an Is it not impossible that all Men may be Lyars, or that a Company of Travellers may have more use of their Privilege to abuse the World by false Reports, and to put a Trick upon Mankind? or that all those who pretend to go thither, and bring their Commodities from thence, may go to some other parts of the World, and taking Pleasure in abusing others in the same manner as they have been imposed upon themselves, may say they have been at *America*? Who can tell but all this may be so? And yet I suppose notwithstanding the Possibility of this, no man in his Wits is now possessed with so incredible a Folly as to doubt whether there be such a Place. The Case is the very same as to the Certainty of an ancient Book, and of the Sense of plain Expressions: We have no Demonstration for these Things, and we expect none, because we know the Things are not capable of it. We are not infallibly certain that any Book is so ancient as it pretends to be, or that it was written by him whose Name it bears, or that this is the Sense of such and such Passages in it; it is possible all this may be otherwise, *that is*, it implies no Contradiction: But we are very well assured that it is not; nor hath any prudent man any just Cause to make the least Doubt of

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II.

of it. For a bare Possibility that a thing may be, or not be, is no just Cause of doubting whether a thing be or not. It is possible all the People in *France* may die this Night; but I hope the Possibility of this doth not incline any man in the least to think it will be so: It is possible the Sun may not rise to morrow morning; and yet, for all this, I suppose that no man hath the least doubt but that it will.

§. 3. But because this *Principle*, viz. *That in matters of Religion a Man cannot be reasonably satisfy'd with any thing less than that infallible Assurance which is wrought by Demonstration*, is the main Pillar of Mr. S's Book; therefore, beside what hath been already said to shew the Unreasonableness of this principle, I shall take a little pains to manifest to him how much he is contradicted in this by the Chief of his Brethren of the Tradition, viz. Mr. *Rushworth*, Dr. *Holden*, Mr. *Cressy*, and Mr. *White*, who, besides Mr. S. and one *I. B.* are (so far as I can learn) all the publick Patrons that ever this *Hypothesis* of Oral Tradition hath had in the World; and if Mr. *White* (as I have Reason to believe) was the Author of those Dialogues which pass under *Rushworth's* Name, the Number of them is yet less. Now if I can shew that this *Principle* (esteem'd by Mr. S. so fundamental to this *Hypothesis*) is plainly contradicted by the principal *Affertors* of Oral Tradition, I shall hereby gain one of these two Things, either that these great Patrons of Oral Tradition were ignorant of the true Foundation of their own *Hypothesis*, or that this *Principle* is not necessary for the Support of it. Not that I would be so understood as if I did deny that these very *Persons* do sometimes speak very big Words of the Necessity of Infallibility: But if it be their Pleasure to contradict themselves, as I have no Reason to be displeased, so neither to be concerned for it; but shall leave it to Mr. S. to reconcile *them* first to *themselves*, and then (if he pleases) afterwards to *himself*.



§. 4. I begin with Mr. *Rusbworth* of immortal Memory, for that noble Attempt of his, to persuade the World that notwithstanding he was the first *Inventor* of this *Hypothesis* of Oral Tradition, yet he could prove that the Church had in all Ages owned it, and proceeded upon it as her only Rule of Faith. He in his *Third Dialogue*, \* when his Nephew objects to him, That perhaps a Protestant would say that all his foregoing Discourse was but Probability and Likelihood, and therefore to hazard a Man's Estate upon Peradventures, were something hard, and not very rationally done : Replies thus to him, What Security do your Merchants, your Statesmen, your Soldiers, those that go to Law, nay, even those that till your Grounds and work for their Livings ; what Security, I say, do all these go upon ? Is it greater than the Security which these Grounds afford ? Surely no ; and yet no Man esteems them foolish. All human Affairs are hazardous, and have some Adventure in them : And therefore he who requires evident Certainty only in matters of Religion, discovers in himself a less mind to the Goods promised in the next Life, than to these which he seeks here in this World upon weaker Assurance. However, the greatest Evidence that can be to him that is not capable of convincing Demonstrations (which the greatest part of Mankind fall short of) is but conjectural. So that (according to Mr. *Rusbworth*) it is not Reason and Discretion, but want of Love to God and Religion, which makes men require greater Evidence for Matters of Religion than for human Affairs, which yet (he tells us) are hazardous, and have some Adventure in them, and consequently are not capable of Demonstration. Besides, if Demonstrative Evidence be an essential Property of the Rule of Faith, (as Mr. S. affirms) then this Rule cannot (according to Mr. *Rusbworth*) be of any use to the greatest part of Mankind, because they are not capable of convincing Demonstrations. Again, Do but consider (says he) how unequal and unjust a Condition it is, that

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SECT. 9.  
& 4.

Ib. Sect. 6.

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*that the Claim of the present Church shall not be heard, unless she can confute all the Peradventures that Wit may invent, and solve all the Arguments which the infinite variety of Time, Place, and Occasions may have given Way unto; and then you will see how unreasonable an Adversary he is, who will not be content with any Satisfaction, but such as Man's Nature scarcely affords. And is it not equally unjust in Mr. S. not to let Scripture's Claim be heard unless we can confute every Peradventure [and Might it not be otherwise] that Wit may invent? See then, how unreasonable an Adversary Mr. S. is, who will not be content with any Satisfaction but such as (according to Mr. Rushworth) Man's Nature scarcely affords.*

*Dr. Holden (I confess) states the Matter somewhat cautiously, when he tells us. <sup>a</sup> That it shall suffice for the present to determine, that the Wisdom of the Creator hath afforded us such an Assurance, especially of Truths necessary to Salvation, as is suitable to our Nature, and best fitted for the safe Conduct of our Lives in Moral and Religious Affairs: But if we interpret these general Expressions by the Passages I before cited out of Mr. Rushworth (as in Reason we may, since the Doctor is beholden to him for the best Part of his Book) then nothing can make more against Mr. S's Principle.*

<sup>b</sup> C. 19.  
Sect. 5.

*§. 5. Mr. Cressy, in his Exomologesis, <sup>b</sup> says, That such Teachers as approached nearest to the Fountain of Truth, Christ and his Apostles, had Means of informing themselves in Apostolical Tradition incomparably beyond us. Mr. S. may do well to shew what those Means were which are so incomparably beyond his Infallibility and Demonstration. The same Author <sup>c</sup> does very much applaud Stapleton's Determination of the Question concerning the Church's Infallibility, which is as follows, That the Church does not expect to be taught by God immediately by new Revelations, but makes use of several Means, &c. as been govern'd not by Apostles, &c.*

<sup>c</sup> C. 32.  
Sect. 4.

&c. but by ordinary Pastors and Teachers. That SECT. IV.  
*these Pastors, in making use of these several means of*  
*Decision, proceed not as the Apostles did, with a pe-*  
*culiar infallible Direction of the Holy Spirit, but*  
*with a prudential Collection not always necessary. That*  
*to the Apostles, who were the first Masters of Evan-*  
*gelical Faith, and Founders of the Church, such an*  
*infallible Certitude of Means was necessary not so now*  
*to the Church, &c. If this be true, That an infallible*  
*Certitude of Means is not now necessary to the Church,*  
*and that her Pastors do now, in deciding Matters*  
*of Faith, proceed only with a prudent Collection*  
*not always necessary; then it should seem that a*  
*searching Wit may maintain his Ground and Suspence,*  
*even against the Church also, with A might it not*  
*be otherwise? Again, Mr. Cressy<sup>d</sup> tells us, That<sup>d</sup> Append.*  
*Truth and our Obligation to believe it, is in an higher<sup>c</sup>. 5.*  
*Degree in Scripture, than in the Decisions of the*  
*Church, as Bellarmine acknowledges; which is to*  
*say, that we may have greater Assurance of the*  
*Truth of Doctrines contained in the Scriptures,*  
*than we can have of any Doctrine from the De-*  
*termination of the Church. But if we have the*  
*greatest Assurance that can be of Truths delivered*  
*to us by the Church, as Mr. S. affirms, then I*  
*would fain learn of him what that higher Degree*  
*of Assurance is which Bellarmine speaks of, and*  
*whether it be greater than the greatest? Not to*  
*insist upon that (which yet I cannot but by the*  
*Way take Notice of) that Mr. Cressy, by his Ap-*  
*probation of this Determination of Bellarmine's,*  
*doth advance the Scripture above the Church as*  
*to one of the most essential Properties of the Rule*  
*of Faith, viz. the Certainty of it.*

But the most eminent Testimony to my Purpose  
in Mr. Cressy, is that famous Passage<sup>c</sup> which hath<sup>c</sup> C. 40.  
given so much Offence to several of his own Sect. 3. &c.  
Church) wherein he acknowledges the Unfortunate-  
ness (to him) of the Word Infallibility, and tells us,  
That



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That he could find no such Word in any Council; That no Necessity appear'd to him, that either he or any other Protestant should ever have heard that Word nam'd, and much less press'd with so much Earnestness as of late it has generally been in Disputations and Books of Controversy; and that Mr. Chillingworth combats this Word with too great Success, insomuch that if this Word were once forgotten, or but lead by, Mr. Chillingworth's Arguments would lose the greatest Part of their Strength; and that if this Word were confin'd to the Schools where it was bred, there would be still no Inconvenience: And that since by manifest Experience the English Protestants think themselves so secure, when they have Leave to stand or fall by that Word, and in very Deed have so much to say for themselves when they are pressed unnecessarily with it: Since likewise it is a Word capable of so high a Sense that we cannot devise one more full and proper to attribute to God himself, &c. Since all this is so, he thinks he cannot be blamed, if such Reasons move him to wish that the Protestants may never be invited to combat the Authority of the Church under that Notion. A very ingenuous acknowledgment, and as cross to Mr. S's Principle as any Thing can be. But the Word *Infallibility* was not so unfortunate to Mr. Cressy, as his untoward Explication of the fore-cited Passage in his *Appendix*, which he afterwards published chiefly by way of Vindication of himself against the *Learned Author* of the *Preface* to my Lord Falkland's Discourse of *Infallibility*. There he tells us, That there are several Degrees of *Infallibility*. And that we may know what Degrees of *Infallibility* he thinks necessary to be attributed to the Church, this following Passage will inform us: 'Methinks (he says) if God have furnish'd his Divine and Supernatural Truth with Evidence equal to this, the Sun will shine to Morrow, or that there will be a Spring and Harvest next Year, we are infinitely obliged to bless his Providence, and justly condemned, if we refuse

• Append.  
Sect. 2. an  
3.

to

' to believe the least of such Truths, as shewing SECT.  
 ' less Affection to save our Souls, than the dull IV.  
 ' Plowmen to sow their Corn, who certainly have  
 ' far less Evidence for their Harvest than Catho-  
 ' licks for their Faith; *and yet* they insist not pee-  
 ' vishly upon every capricious Objection, nor exact  
 ' an infallible Security of a plentiful reaping next  
 ' Summer, but notwithstanding all Difficulties  
 ' and Contingencies proceed chearfully in their  
 ' painful Husbandry.' So that according to this  
 Discourse, whatever Degree of Assurance the  
 Church hath, or can give to those who rely up-  
 on her, it is plain that no further Degree is ne-  
 cessary than what the Husbandman, when he sows,  
 hath of a plentiful Harvest; and that men are  
 justly condemned if they refuse to believe the least  
 Truth upon such Security, which yet (by his  
 own Acknowledgment) is liable to Contingencies.  
 Nay farther, that men are not reasonable, but pee-  
 vish, in *exacting infallible Security*, and *insisting up-*  
*on every capricious Objection*, such as is Mr. S's  
*Might it not be otherwise?* Now as to this Degree  
 of Assurance, or (as he calls it) Infallibility, I can-  
 not but grant what he says of it to be most true,  
*viz. That in a severe Acceptation of the Word* it is  
*not rigorously infallible*; that is (as he explains it)  
 it is not *absolutely impossible*, nor does it *imply a*  
*flat Contradiction* that the Thing whereof we are  
 so assured may be otherwise: But then I utterly de-  
 ny, that according to any true Acceptation of  
 this Word, such a Degree of Assurance as he  
 speaks of can be called Infallibility; and withal I  
 affirm, That none of those several Degrees of In-  
 fallibility which he mentions, excepting that only  
 which imports an absolute Impossibility, can with  
 any tolerable Propriety of Speech, or regard to the  
 true Meaning and Use of the Word, have the Name  
 of Infallibility given to them. For Infallibility can  
 signify nothing else but an utter Impossibility that  
 one

PART. one should be deceived in that Matter as to which

I. he is supposed to be infallible; and to say such a Thing is impossible, is to say that the Existence of it implies a flat Contradiction: So that whosoever asserts Degrees of Infallibility, is obliged to shew that there are Degrees of absolute Impossibilities, and of perfect Contradictions; and he had need of a very sharp and piercing Wit, that is to find out Degrees where there neither are or can be any. Indeed, in respect of the Objects of Knowledge, it is easy to conceive how Infallibility may be extended to more Objects or fewer; but in respect of the Degree of Assurance (of which Mr. *Cressy* speaks) it is altogether unimaginable how any one can be more or less out of *all possibility* of being deceived in those Things wherein he is supposed to be infallible; for no one can be more removed from the Possibility of being deceived, than he that is out of *all Possibility* of being deceived, and whosoever is less than this is not infallible, because he only is so who is out of *all possibility* of being deceived in those Matters wherein he is supposed to be infallible: So that Mr. *Cressy's* lower Degrees of Infallibility are no Degrees of that Assurance which may properly be called infallible (for that can have no Degrees) but of that Assurance which is less than infallible. And he needed not have raised all this Dust about the Degrees of Infallibility, had it not been that by the means of such a Cloud he might make the more convenient Escape out of that Strait he was in between the Clamours of his own Church, and the Advantage which his Adversaries made of his free and open Discourse against Infallibility: For any one that carefully reads his Book, will find that he understands nothing by the Infallibility of the Church, but *an Authority of obliging all Christians to submit to her Decisions*, which is no more but what every Supreme Civil Judge hath

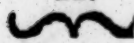


in Matters, viz. a Power to determine those Con-  
 troversies that lie before him as well as he *can* or *will*, and when that is done every one is bound to  
 submit to such Determinations; but yet for all  
 this, no Man ever dreamt a Supreme Civil Judge  
 to be *infallible* more than another Man. I do not  
 now dispute the Extent of the Church's Autho-  
 rity; but if we have no other Infallibility but what  
 a full Authority of Decision does suppose I am sure  
 she hath none at all.

Before I leave Mr. *Cressy*, I cannot but take  
 notice how *unfortunate* and *disingenuous* he is in  
 explaining the Meaning of these Words of his  
 own, viz. [*Against this Word Infallibility Mr. Chil-*  
*lingworth's Book especially combats, and this with*  
*too too great Success*] which in his *Appendix*<sup>a</sup> he in-<sup>a</sup> C. 5.  
 terprets thus; *Success, I mean not against the Church,* Sect. 6.  
*but against his own Soul, and the Souls of his Fel-*  
*low English Protestants, &c.* As if one that had  
 wished well to *Cæsar* should have said, *That Pom-*  
*pey had fought against him with too too great Suc-*  
*cess*; and being afterwards challenged by *Cæsar's*  
 Party, as having said that *Pompey* had conquer'd  
*Cæsar*, he should explain himself thus, *Success, I*  
*mean not against Cæsar, but against his own Life,*  
*and the Lives of his Followers.* Can any Thing be  
 finer than for any Man to say, that by *Pompey's*  
*Success* in fighting against *Cæsar*, he means that  
*Cæsar* had beaten *Pompey*? Which is no more than  
 if one should take the Liberty to interpret *White* by  
*Black*.

§. 6. Mr. *White* doth most expressly contradict  
 this Principle of Mr. *S's* in these following Pas-  
 sages. In his *Preface* to Mr. *Rushworth* he says,  
*That such a Certainty as makes the Cause always*  
*work the same Effect, though it takes not away the*  
*absolute Possibility of working otherwise, ought ab-*  
*solutely to be reckoned in the Degree of true Certain-*  
*ty; and that those Authors are mistaken who under-*

PART. *value it.* So that it seems Mr. S. is mistaken in

II. affirming that a Man cannot be certain of any  
 Thing so long as there is any Possibility that it  
 may be otherwise. In his Answer to my Lord Falk-

p. 14, 15. *land* he says, ' *That in* moral Matters and such  
 ' as are subject to human Action, we must expect  
 ' such Assurance as human Actions bear. It for  
 ' the Government of your spiritual Life you have  
 ' as much as for the Management of your natural  
 ' and civil Life, what can you expect more? Two  
 ' or Three Witnesses of Men beyond Exception  
 ' will cast a Man out of not only his Lands but  
 ' Life and all. He that among Merchants will  
 ' not adventure where there is a Hundred to One  
 ' of gaining, will be accounted a silly Factor :  
 ' And among Soldiers, he that will fear Danger  
 ' where but One of a Hundred is slain, shall not  
 ' escape the Stain of Cowardize. What then shall  
 ' we expect in Religion, but to see a main Ad-  
 ' vantage on the one Side which we may rest our  
 ' selves on? And for the rest remember we are  
 ' Men subject to Chance and Mutability, and thank  
 ' God he hath given us that Assurance in a super-  
 ' natural Way, which we are contented withal in  
 ' our civil Ventures and Possessions, which neverthe-  
 ' less God knoweth we often love better and would  
 ' hazard less than the unknown Good of the Life  
 ' to come. *Again,* ' If God Almighty hath in all  
 ' Sorts and Manners provided his Church that she  
 ' may enlighten every Man in his Way that go-  
 ' eth the Way of a Man, and let every Man con-  
 ' sider which is the fit Way for himself, and what  
 ' in other Matters of that Way he accounted E-  
 ' vidence. And if there be no Interest in his  
 ' Soul to make him loth to believe, what in ano-  
 ' ther Matter of the like Nature he doth not stick  
 ' at, or heavy to practise what he sees clearly e-  
 ' nough, I fear not his Choice.' Once more;  
 directing a Man in his Search after rational Satisfac-  
 tion

p. 30.

faction in Matters of Religion, he hath this Paſ-  
 ſage: ' a Besides this he must have this Care, that  
 ' he seek what the Nature of the Subject can  
 ' yield; and not as those *Physicians*, who when  
 ' they have promised no less than Immortality, can  
 ' at last only reach to some Conversation of Health  
 ' or Youth in some small Degree: So I could wish  
 ' the Author to well assure himself first that there  
 ' is possibly an Infallibility, before he be too earnest  
 ' to be contented with nothing less; for what if hu-  
 ' man Nature should not be capable of so great a  
 ' Good? Would he therefore think it fitting to  
 ' live without any Religion, because he could  
 ' not get such a one as himself desired, though  
 ' with more than a Man's Wish? Were it not  
 ' rational to see, whether among Religions some  
 ' one have not such notable Advantages over the  
 ' rest, as in Reason it might seem human Nature  
 ' might be contented withal? Let him cast his  
 ' Account with the dearest Things he hath, his  
 ' own or Friends Lives, his Estate, his Hope of  
 ' Posterity, and see upon what Terms of Advan-  
 ' tage he is ready to venture all these; and then  
 ' return to Religion, and see whether, if he do  
 ' not venture his Soul upon the like, it be truly  
 ' Reason or some other not confessed motive, which  
 ' withdraws him. For my own part, as I doubt  
 ' not of an infallibility, so I doubt not but setting  
 ' that aside, there be those Excellencies found  
 ' on the Catholick Party which may force a Man  
 ' to prefer it, and to venture all he hath upon it  
 ' before all other Religions and Sects in the World.  
 ' Why then may not one who after long search-  
 ' ing findeth no Infallibility, rest himself on the like,  
 ' supposing Man's Nature affords no better?'

Are not these fair Concessions, which the Evi-  
 dence and Force of Truth have extorted from these  
 Authors? So that it seems that That which Mr. S.  
 calls ' a civil Piece of *Atheistry*, is advanced in most  
 O 2

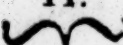
SECT.  
IV.

p. 46.

e Letter to  
his An-  
swer, p. 5.

express



PART II.  exprefs Words by his best Friends; and therefore I hope *he* will (as he threatens me) *be smart* with them *in opposition to so damnable and fundamental an Error*. And when ever he attempts this, I would intreat him to remember that he hath these Two Things to prove: *First*, That no Evidence but Demonstration can give a Man sufficient Assurance of any Thing. *Secondly*, That a bare Possibility that a Thing may be otherwise, is a rational Cause of Doubting, and a wise Ground of Suspence: Which, when he hath proved, I shall not grudge him his Infallibility.

SECT. V. *That Scripture is sufficient to convince the most acute Adversaries; and that it is sufficiently certain.*

§. I. **T**HE last Part of this *Third Discourse* endeavours to shew, *that the Scripture is not convictive of the most obstinate and acute Adversaries*. As for the *Obstinate*, he knows my mind already. Let us see why *the most acute Adversary* may not be convinced by Scripture: Because, as he objects, <sup>a</sup> *First*, We cannot be certain that this Book is God's Word, because of the many strange Absurdities and Heresies in the open Letter as it lies, as that God hath Hands and Feet, &c. and because of the Contradiction in it: To which I have already returned an Answer. *Secondly*, Because, (as he saith) <sup>b</sup> we cannot be certain of the Truth of the Letter in any particular Text, that it was not foisted in, or some way altered in its Significativeness; and if it be a negative Proposition, that the Particle [not] was not inserted; if affirmative, not left out. And <sup>c</sup> if we pretend to be certain of this, he demands our Demonstration for it. But how unreasonable this Demand is, I hope I have sufficiently shewn. And to shew it yet farther, I ask him, How their Church knows, that the Particle [not] was not left out of any Text in which it is not found

found in their Copies? I know he hath a ready Answer, viz. by Oral Tradition. But this (according to him <sup>d</sup>) only reaches to *Scripture's Letter* <sup>V.</sup> *so far as it is coincident with the main Body of Christian Doctrine*; concerning the rest of Scripture it is impossible (according to his own Principles) that they should have any Security that the Particle [not] was not unduly inserted, or left out by the Transcribers. Nay, as to these Texts of Scripture which fall in with the main Body of Christian Doctrine, I demand his Demonstration that the Particle [not] was not unduly inserted or left out, not only in those Texts, but also in the Oral Tradition of the Doctrines coincident with the Sense of those Texts. If he say, It was impossible any Age should conspire to leave out or insert the Particle [not] in the Oral Tradition; so say I it was that they should conspire to leave it out of the written Text: But then I differ from him thus far, That I do not think this naturally impossible, so as that it can rigorously be demonstrated, but only morally impossible, so that no body hath any Reason to doubt of it; which, to a prudent Man is as good as a Demonstration. *Pyrrho* himself never advanced any Principle of *Scepticism* beyond this, viz. That Men ought to question the Credit of all Books, concerning which they cannot demonstrate as to every Sentence in them, that the Particle [not] was not inserted (if it be affirmative) or left out (if it be negative). If so much be required to free a Man from reasonable Doubting concerning a Book, how happy are they that have attained to infallibility? What he saith concerning the *Variae Lectiones* <sup>e</sup> of Scripture, hath already <sup>e</sup> p. 38. had a sufficient Answer.

§. 2. In his *Fourth Discourse* he endeavours to shew, <sup>a</sup> That the Scripture is not certain in it self, <sup>a</sup> p. 33. and consequently, not ascertained to us. First, Not certain, materially considered <sup>b</sup> as consisting of such <sup>b</sup> p. 34

PART and such Characters, because Books are liable to be  
 II. burnt, torn, blotted, worn out. We grant it is not

impossible but that any, or all the Books in the World, may be burnt; But then we say likewise, That a Book so universally dispersed may easily be preserved; though we have no Assurance that God will preserve it, in case all Men should be so foolish or so careless as to endeavour or suffer the Abolition of it. But it seems the Scriptures cannot be a Rule of Faith if they be liable to any external Accidents: And this (he tells us <sup>c</sup>) *Though it may seem a remote and impertinent Exception, yet to one who considers the wise Dispositions of Divine Providence, it will deserve a deep Consideration; because the Salvation of Mankind being the End of God's making Nature, the Means to it should be more settled, strong and unalterable, than any other piece of Nature whatever.* But notwithstanding this wise Reason, this *Exception* still seems to me both *remote* and *impertinent*: For if this which he calls a Reason be a Truth, it will from thence necessarily follow, not only that the Doctrine of Christ must be conveyed by such a means as is more unalterable than the Course of Nature; but also by a clear Parity of Reason, that all the means of our Salvation do operate towards the accomplishing of their End with greater certainty than the fire burns, or the Sun shines; which they can never do, unless they operate more necessarily than any natural Causes; how they can do so upon voluntary Agents, I desire Mr. S. to inform me.

§ 3. He proceeds by a long Harangue to shew,  
<sup>d</sup> That not only these material Characters in themselves are corruptible, but *in Complexion with the Causes actually laid in the World to preserve them entire; because either those Causes are material, and then they are also liable to continual Alterations; or spiritual, that is, the Minds of Men, and from these*



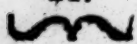
we may with good Reason hope for a greater degree of Constancy than from any other piece of Nature ; which, by the way, is a very strange Paradox, that the Actions of voluntary Agents have a greater Certainty and Constancy in them than those of natural Agents ; of which the Fall of Angels and Men, compared with the Continuance of the Sun and Stars in their first State, is a very good Evidence.

SECT. V.

§. 4. But he adds a Caution, • ‘ That they are ’ p. 35.

‘ perfectly unalterable from their Nature, and un-  
‘ errable, if due Circumstances be observed, that  
‘ is, if due Proposals be made to beget certain  
‘ Knowledge, and due Care used to attend to such  
‘ Proposals.’ But who can warrant, That *due Pro-*  
*posals* will always be made to Men and *due Care* used  
by them? If these be uncertain, where’s the *Con-*  
*stancy* and *Unerrableness* he talks so much of? So  
that notwithstanding the Constancy of this *spiri-*  
*tual Cause (the Mind of Man)* of preserving Scrip-  
tures entire, yet in order to this (as he tells<sup>a</sup> us ‘ so ’ p. 36.

‘ many Actions are to be done, which are com-  
‘ pounded and made up of an innumerable multi-  
‘ tude of several Particularities to be observed, e-  
‘ very of which may be mistaken apart, each be-  
‘ ing a distinct little Action in it single self, such  
‘ as is the transcribing of a whole Book, consist-  
‘ ing of such myriads of Words, single Letters,  
‘ and Titles or Stops ; and the several Actions of  
‘ writing over each of these so short and cursory,  
‘ that it prevents Diligence, and exceeds human  
‘ Care, to keep awake and apply distinct Attenti-  
‘ ons to every of these distinct Actions.’ Mr.  
*Rushworth*<sup>b</sup> much out-does Mr. S. in these minute<sup>b</sup> Dial. 2  
Cavils ; for he tells us, ‘ That supposing an Ori- Sect. 7.  
‘ ginal Copy of Christ’s Words, written by one  
‘ of the Evangelists in the same Language, let  
‘ him have set down every Word and Syllable ; yet  
‘ Men conversant in noting the Changes of mean-

PART  
II.

ings in Words will tell us, that divers Accents in the Pronunciation of them, the turning of the Speaker's Head or Body this or that way, &c. may so change the sense of the Words, that they will seem quite different in Writing from what they were in speaking.' I hope that Oral and Practical Tradition hath been careful to preserve all these Circumstances, and hath deliver'd down Christ's Doctrine with all the right *Traditional Accents, Nods, and Gestures* necessary for the understanding of it; otherwise the Omission of these may have so altered the Sense of it, that it may be now quite different from what it was at first. But to answer Mr. S. We do not pretend to be assured that it is naturally impossible that the Scriptures should have been corrupted or changed, but only to be sufficiently assured that they have not received any material Alteration, from as good Arguments as the Nature of the Subject will bear. But if his *Reason* had not been very *short and cursory*, he might easily have reflected, that *Oral Tradition* is equally liable to all these Contingencies: For it doth as much *prevent Diligence, and exceed human Care to keep awake and apply distinct Attentions to the distinct Actions of Speaking, as of Writing*, and I hope he will not deny, that a Doctrine *Orally delivered* consists of *Words, and Letters, and Accents, and Stops*, as well as a Doctrine *Written*; and that the several Actions of *Speaking* are as *short and cursory* as of *Writing*.

\* p. 38.

b p. 38.

c p. 38.

§. 5. Secondly, He tells us, \* *Scripture, formally considered as to its Significativeness, is also uncertain*; First, b *Because of the Uncertainty of the Letter*: This is already answered. Secondly, c *Because the certain Sense of it is not to be arrived to by the Vulgar, who are destitute of Languages and Arts*. True, where Men are not permitted to have the Scriptures in their own Language, and understand no other: But where they are allowed the Scriptures translated into their own Language, they may understand them;

them; all necessary Points of Faith and Practice being sufficiently plain in any Translation of the Bible that I know of. And that <sup>a</sup> eminent Wits cannot agree about the Sense of the Texts which concern the main Points of Faith, hath been spoken to already. SECT. VI. P. 38.

§. 6. As for the Reverence he pretends to Scripture in the Conclusion of his *Fourth Discourse*, he might have spared that, after all the Raillery and Rudeness he hath used against it. It is easy to conjecture, both from his Principles and his uncivil Expressions concerning them, what his Esteem is of those sacred Oracles. Probably it was requisite in Prudence to cast in a few good Words concerning the Scriptures, for the sake of the more tender and squeamish Novices of their Religion, or (as Mr. *Rusworth's Nephew* <sup>b</sup> says frankly and openly) *for the Satisfaction of indifferent Men, that have been brought up in this verbal and apparent Respect of the Scripture*; who it seems are not yet attained to that Degree of Catholick Piety and Fortitude, as to endure patiently that the Word of God should be reviled or slighted. Besides that in Reference to those whom they hope hereafter to convert (who might be too much alienated from their Religion, if he had expressed nothing but Contempt towards a Book which Protestants and Christians in all Ages, 'till the very Dregs of Popery, have been bred up to a high Veneration of) it was not much amiss to pass this formal Compliment upon the Bible; which the Wise of his own Religion will easily understand, and may serve to catch the rest. But let him not deceive himself, *God is not mocked*. Dial. 2. SECT. 14.

SECT. VI. *That the Properties of a Rule of Faith do not belong to Oral Tradition.*

§. 1. **S**Econdly, He comes to shew, *That the Properties of a Rule of Faith belong to Oral Tradition*. And, *First*, He gives a tedious Explanation of P. 14.



**PART** of the Nature of this *Oral Practical Tradition*, which  
**II.** amounts to this; that as in Reference to the civil Education of Children, they are taught their own and others Names, to *write and read, and exercise their Trades*; so in reference to Religion, the Children of Christians *first bear Sounds, afterwards by degrees get dim Notions of God, Christ, Saviour, Heaven, Hell, Virtue, Vice, and by degrees practise what they have heard*; they are *shewn to say Grace, and their Prayers, to hold up their Hands, or perhaps Eyes, and to kneel, and other Postures*. Afterwards they are acquainted with the *Creed, Ten Commandments, and Sacraments, some common Forms of Prayer, and other Practices of Christianity, and are directed to order their Lives accordingly, and are guided in all this by the Actions and Carriage of the elder Faithful*; and this goes on by *insensible Degrees, not by Leaps, from a Hundred Years to a Hundred, but from Month to Month, and even less*. If this be all that Tradition doth, this is nothing but what is done among Protestants, and that with greater Advantage; because we always teach Children to say their Prayers in a known Tongue; so as they may understand them. And we also teach them the Creed, and Ten Commandments, and the Sacraments, so many as Christ hath instituted, and no more. So that if this be so infallible a way of conveying the Doctrine of Christianity, we have it among us: And we do over and besides instruct them in the Scriptures, which are the authentick Instrument whereby Christ's Doctrine is conveyed to us. But then we do not suppose (as his *Hypothesis* necessarily enforceth him to do) that the Christian Doctrine is equally taught and learned by all; but by some more, by others less perfectly, according to the different Abilities and Diligence of Parents, and Teachers, and the various Capacities and Dispositions of Children; whereas his *Hypothesis* falls, if all or at least the Generality of Parents, do not instruct their Children with the like Exactness,  
 and

and if the Generality of Children do not receive this Doctrine in the same Perfection that it is delivered. For if it be taught or received with any Variation, it must necessarily be so conveyed, and these Variations will grow daily. I had thought he would have told us how all Parents do teach their Children the whole Body of Christ's Doctrine, and explain to them every Part of it in a Hundred or a Thousand several Expressions signifying the same Sense, and not have instanced in Two *Set Forms*, such as the *Creed*, and *Ten Commandments*; for according to Mr. *White*, <sup>2</sup> *That cannot be a Tradition,* <sup>2</sup> Apolog. *which is delivered down in Set Words.* VI. p. 81.

§. 2. Having thus explained Oral Tradition, he comes to shew that the Properties of a *Rule of Faith* agree to it. I have already shewed, that the true Properties of a *Rule of Faith* are but *Two*, viz. *That it be plain and intelligible, and that it be sufficiently certain.* The *First* of these, that Oral Tradition may deliver a Doctrine plainly and intelligibly, I grant him: All the Difficulty is about the *Second* Property whether we have sufficient Assurance that the Doctrine delivered down by Oral Tradition hath received no Corruption or Change in its Conveyance: And all that he pretends to prove in this *Discourse*, is, That if this Rule hath been followed and kept to all along, the Christian Doctrine neither hath, nor can have received any Change; that is, if the next Age after the Apostles did truly, and without any Alteration, deliver the Christian Doctrine to their immediate Successors, and they to theirs, and so on, then upon this Supposition the Doctrine of the present Traditionary Church must be the very same with that which was delivered to the Apostles. All this is readily granted to him. But that this Rule hath always been followed, nay, that it is impossible there should have been any Deviation from it (as he pretends) this we deny, not only as untrue, but as one of the most absurd Propositions that ever yet pretended to demonstrative Evidence.

PART

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P A R T III.

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*In which Mr. S' s Demonstrations and Corollaries  
are examined.*

SECT. I. *Considerations touching his Demonstrations  
in general.*

PART  
III.

**B**EFORE I come to speak particularly to his *Demonstrations*, I shall premise these Two *Considerations*: *First*, That (according to the Principle of the Patrons of Tradition) no Man can, by his private Reason, certainly find out the true *Rule of Faith*. *Secondly*, That (according to Mr. S.) the Way of Demonstration is no certain way to find out the *Rule of Faith*. If either of these be made out, his Demonstrations lose all their Force. If the *First* be made good, then he cannot demonstrate the Infallibility of Tradition, nor consequently, that That is the *Rule of Faith*. If the *Second*, then the Way of Demonstration which he pretends to take, signifies nothing.

§. 2. *First*, No man can (according to the Principles of the Patrons of Tradition) by his private Reason certainly find out what is the *Rule of Faith*. Suppose a Heathen to be desirous to inform himself of the Christian Faith; in order to which he is inquisitive after some Rule by which he may take a measure of it, and come certainly to know what it is: He enquires of Christians what their Rule is, and finds them divided about it, some saying that the Scripture, others that Oral Tradition, is the Rule. In this Case it is not possible (without a Revelation) for this man to find out the *Rule of Faith*, but by his own private Reason examining and weighing the Arguments and Pretences of both sides. And when he hath done this, unless he can by his Reason



son demonstrate that the one is a certain and infallible SECT. I. Rule, and the other not so, he hath not (according to Mr. S.) found out the *Rule of Faith*. But Reason can never do this, according to Mr. S. For speaking of demonstrating the Certainty of Tradition, he tells us, *That Tradition hath for its Basis man's Nature, not according to his Intellectuals, which do but darkly grope in the pursuit of Science, &c.* And again, speaking how Reason brings men to the *Rule of Faith*, he uses this Comparison: *She is like a dim-sighted man, who used his Reason to find a trusty Friend to lead him in the Twilight, and then relied on his Guidance rationally without using his own Reason at all about the way it self.* (So that according to him) the Certainty of Tradition cannot be founded on Demonstration, because it is not founded in the intellectual Part of man, which only can demonstrate. Besides, if it were founded in the intellectual Part, yet that can never be able to demonstrate the Certainty of Tradition, because that Faculty which is dim-sighted, and does but grope darkly in the Pursuit of Science, is incapable of framing Demonstrations. Nor can any man understand how dim-sighted Reason should see clearly to chuse its Guide any more than its Way, especially if it be considered what a pretty Contradiction it is, to say that Reason, as it is dim-sighted, can see clearly.

But Mr. Cressy is not contented to call every Man's Reason dim-sighted, he ventures a Step farther, and calls it hood-wink'd and blind: For he tells us, *That private Reason is apparently a most fallible Guide; and he pities my Lord Falkland's Case, because in the Search of the true Religion he did betake himself to the casual conduct of blind, human, natural Reason,* which afterwards he calls *a Guide that two Persons cannot possibly follow together, because no two Persons (that ever followed any other Guide beside Authority) did or could think all things to be reasonable that all others thought*

P. 53.

Append. 2d. p. 183.

Append. c. 6. Sect. 8.

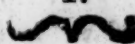
Ib. Sect.

Ib. Sect.

11.

PART. *thought so; and by Consequence such a Guide that as*  
 III. *long as he continues in that Office, there cannot possibly be*  
 any Church any where : which (says he) is an infallible  
*Eviction that this is an imaginary seducing Guide, since*  
*it is impossible that That should be a Guide appointed for*  
*any Christian, which neither Christ nor his Apostles,*  
*nor any of their Followers ever mentioned, yea, which*  
*formally destroys one of our twelve Articles of the Apo-*  
*stles Creed, viz. I believe the Holy Catholick Church.*  
 Thus he does by Reason clearly and infallibly evince,  
 that Reason cannot be otherwise than a most blind  
 and fallible Guide. This it is to talk of Things when a  
 man looks only upon one Side of them ; as if because  
 Reason has a blind Side, and is uncertain in some  
 Things, therefore we ought to conclude her univer-  
 sally blind and uncertain in every thing ; and as if  
 because all Men cannot think all Things reasonable  
 which any one Man thinks to be so, therefore it is  
 to be doubted whether those common Principles of  
 Reason be true which Mankind are generally agreed  
 in. And that Mr. Cressy speaks here of the Use of  
 our private Reason in the finding out of our Rule, is  
 clear from what he says in the next Section, viz. *That*  
*this hood-wink'd Guide (enquiring into Scripture, and*  
*searching after Tradition) may possibly stumble upon the*  
*Way to Unity and Truth, that is, the true Catholick*  
*Church.* If this be true, why does Mr. S. pretend  
 that he can by Reason demonstrate the Infallibility  
 of Tradition, and by this hood-winked Guide lead  
 Men to the true Rule of Faith? And what a pitiful  
 Encouragement would this be to an inquisitive Phi-  
 losopher (who knowing no other Guide but his Rea-  
 son, whereby to find out whether Scripture or Tra-  
 dition be the Rule) to tell him that by the Help of  
 this hood-wink'd Guide he might possibly stumble upon  
 the Right?

A Man may justly stand amazed at the Incon-  
 sistency of these Mens Discourses and Principles. In  
 one Mood they are all for Demonstration, and for  
 convincing

convincing Men in the way of perfect Science which SECT. I.  
 is the true Rule of Faith: But then again when another *Fit* takes them, there's no such Thing as Science,   
*human Reason* grows all on the sudden *dim-sighted*,  
 and at the next Word is struck *stark-blind*; and then  
 the very utmost that it can do towards the bringing  
 of an unprejudiced and inquisitive Person to the  
 true Rule of Faith is to leave him in a Possibility of  
*stumbling* upon it; but if he be a Heretick that makes  
 use of private Reason for his Guide, then <sup>b</sup> it is im- <sup>b</sup> Append.  
 possible but that he with his blind Guide should fall into <sup>c.</sup> 7. Sect.  
 the Pit. I cannot, for my part, imagine how they <sup>8.</sup>  
 can reconcile the *Blindness* of human Reason with all  
 that Noise which they make about Science and De-  
 monstration; but this I must confess, that these kind  
 of Discourses which I meet with in Mr. S. and Mr.  
*Cressy*, are very proper Arguments to persuade a  
 Man of the Blindness of human Reason. And in-  
 deed there is one Passage in Mr. *Cressy* which gives  
 me very great Satisfaction concerning these matters,  
 where he tells us, ' That the Wit and Judgment of <sup>Ibid.</sup>  
*Catholicks* is to renounce their own Judgment, and de-  
 pose their own Wit. Now he that professes to have  
 done this, may write Contradictions, and No-body  
 ought to challenge him for it. However, it is a  
 very ingenuous Acknowledgment, that when he  
 forsook our Church and turned Papist, he laid aside  
 his Judgment and Wit; which is just such an he-  
 roick Act of Judgment, as if a man, in a bravery  
 to shew his Liberty, would sell himself for a Slave.  
 I am glad to understand from an experienced Person,  
 what Charges a Man must be at when he turns Ro-  
 man Catholic; namely, that whoever will embrace  
 that Religion, must forfeit his Reason.

§. 3. Secondly, The Way of Demonstration is  
 (according to Mr. S.) no certain Way to find out  
 the Rule of Faith. In his 4th Appendix against my  
 Lord of Down, one of the *Eight Mines* (as he calls  
 them) which he lays to blow up my Lord's Dissuasive a-  
 gainst



**PART.** *gainst Popery, is this, That the Method he takes in dissuading cannot be held in Reason to have power to dissuade, unless it be proper to that Effect, that is, not common to that Effect and a contrary one. Now, that being most evidently no Method or Way to such an Effect which many follow and take, yet arrive not at that Effect; 'tis plain to common Sense, that my Lord of Down miscalls his Book a Dissuasive, and that it can have in it no Power of moving the Understanding one way or other, unless he can first vouch some Particularity in the Method he takes, above what's in others in which we experience miscarriage, &c. If this be true, then his Method of Demonstration, is no way to make Men certain of what he pretends to demonstrate, because that is most evidently no way to an Effect which many follow and take, yet arrive not at that Effect; so that 'tis plain to common Sense that Mr. S's Demonstrations can have in them no Power of moving the Understanding one Way or other, unless he can vouch some Particularity in the Demonstrations he pretends to bring, above what is in other pretended Demonstrations, in which we experience Miscarriage. Do not Thomas and Scotus (as Mr. White tells us<sup>d</sup>) all along pretend to demonstrate? and yet it is generally believed that (at least where they contradict one another) one of them failed in his Demonstrations. Did not Mr. Charles Thynne pretend to have demonstrated that a Man at one Jump might leap from London to Rome? And yet I do not think any one was ever satisfied with his Demonstrations. And Mr. S. knows one in the World (whom I will not name because he hath since ingenuously acknowledged his Error) who thought he had demonstrated the Quadrature of the Circle, and was so confident of it as to venture the Reputation of his Demonstrations in Divinity upon it, and some of those Divinity Demonstrations were the very same with Mr. S's. Since therefore the World hath experienced so much Miscarriage in the way of Demonstration; before Mr.*

<sup>d</sup> Extasis,  
P. 24.

S's

S's Demonstrations can be allowed to signify any thing; *he must* (according to his own Law) *vouch* some Particularity in his *Way* and *Method* of Demonstration above what is in other Mens. He hath not any where (that I remember) told us what that *Particularity* is, wherein his *Way* of Demonstration is above other Mens: Nor can I, upon the most diligent Search, find any peculiar Advantage that his *Way* has more than theirs above-mentioned, unless this be one, that he pretends to demonstrate a self-evident Principle; and herein I think he hath plainly the Advantage of Mr. Charles Thynne; and unless this may be counted another Advantage, that he has so extraordinary a Confidence and Conceit of his own Demonstrations, and in this Particular, I must acknowledge that he clearly excels all that have gone before him: In all other Things his Way of Demonstration is but like his Neighbours.

SECT. II. Mr. S's Demonstration a priori.

§. 1. **I** Come now to examine his Demonstrations of this *self-evident Principle* (as he often calls it) that Oral Tradition is a certain and infallible Way of conveying Christ's Doctrine from one Age to another, without any Corruption or Change; which is to say, that it is impossible but that this Rule should always have been kept to. That this is not a *self-evident Principle*, needs no other Evidence than that he goes about to demonstrate it. But yet notwithstanding this, I think he hath as much Reason to call *this* a *self-evident Principle*, as to call his *Proofs* of it *Demonstrations*.

§. 2. In order to his Demonstration a priori, he lays a these Four Grounds, which I shall set down\* p.59,60. in his own Words. First, 'That Christian Doctrine was at first unanimously settled by the Apostles, in the Hearts of the Faithful, dispersed

VOL. III. P in

PART. ' in great Multitudes over several Parts of the  
 III. ' World. Secondly, That this Doctrine was  
 ~~~~~ ' firmly believed by all those Faithful to be the  
 ' Way to Heaven, and the contradicting or deser-
 ' ting it to be the Way to Damnation: So that the
 ' greatest Hopes and Fears imaginable were by en-
 ' gaging the Divine Authority strongly applied to
 ' the minds of the first Believers, encouraging
 ' them to the adhering to that Doctrine, and de-
 ' terring them from relinquishing it; and indeed
 ' infinitely greater than any other whatever, spring-
 ' ing from any temporal Consideration: And that
 ' this was in all Ages the Persuasion of the Faith-
 ' ful. *Thirdly*, That Hopes of Good and Fears of
 ' Harm strongly applied, are the Causes of actual
 ' Will. *Fourthly*, That the Thing was feasible
 ' or within their Power: That what they were
 ' bred to was knowable by them. This put, it
 ' follows as certainly, that a great Number or Bo-
 ' dy of the first Believers, and after faithful in
 ' each Age, that is, from Age to Age, would
 ' continue to hold themselves, and teach their
 ' Children as themselves had been taught, that is,
 ' would follow and stick to Tradition; as it doth,
 ' that a Cause put actually causing produceth its
 ' Effect.' This is his *Demonstration* with the
 Grounds of it.

§. 3. To shew the Vanity and Weakness of this pretended *Demonstration*, I shall assail it these *Three* Ways; by shewing, *First*, That if the Grounds of it were true, they would conclude too much, and prove that to be impossible which common Experience evinceth, and himself must grant to have been. *Secondly*, That his main Grounds are apparently false. *Thirdly*, That his *Demonstration* is confuted by clear and undeniable Instances to the contrary.

SECT. III. *The first Answer to this Demonstration.* SECT. III.

§. 1. IF the Grounds of it were true, they would conclude too much, and prove That to be impossible which common Experience evinceth, and himself must grant to have been. For if these Two Principles be true, *That the greatest Hopes and Fears are strongly applied to the minds of all Christians; and that those Hopes and Fears strongly applied are the Cause of actual Will to adhere constantly to Christ's Doctrine;* then from hence it follows, that none that entertain this Doctrine can ever fall from it, because falling from it is inconsistent with an actual Will of adhering constantly to it: For supposing (as he doth) certain and constant Causes of actual Will to adhere to this Doctrine, those who entertain it must actually will to adhere to it, because a Cause put actually causing produceth its Effect, which is constant Adherence to it. And if this were true, these two Things would be impossible; *First*, That any Christian should turn Apostate or Heretick; *Secondly*, That any Christian should live wickedly: Both which not only frequent and undoubted Experience doth evince, but himself must grant *de facto* to have been.

§. 2. *First*, It would be impossible that any Christian should turn Apostate or Heretick. *Heresy*, according to him, is nothing else but the *renouncing of Tradition*. Now he tells us, *That* p. 60. *the first Renouncers of Tradition must have been true Believers or Holders of it e're they renounced it;* and I suppose there is the same Reason for *Apostates*. But if all Christians or true Believers (as he calls them) have these Arguments of Hope and Fear strongly applied, and Hope and Fear strongly applied be the Causes of actual Will to adhere to this Doctrine; 'tis necessary all Christians should adhere to it, and impossible there should be either Apostates or Hereticks.

PART. For if these Causes be put in *all the Faithful actually*

III. *ally causing* (as the Grounds of his Demonstration suppose,) and *Indefeetibleness* be the proper and necessary Effect of these Causes, as he also saith ^c, then it is impossible that where these Causes are put, there should be any Defection: For a proper and necessary Effect cannot but be where the Causes of such an Effect are put, especially if they be put actually causing; and consequently 'tis impossible that any single Christian should ever either totally apostatize or fall into Heresy, *that is*, renounce Tradition.

^c p. 75.

§. 3. And that this is a genuine Consequence from these Principles (though he will not acknowledge it here, because he saw it would ruin his Demonstration) is liberally acknowledged by him in other Parts of his Discourse. For he tells us,

^b p. 54.

^b *That it exceeds all the Power of Nature (abstracting from the Causes of Madness and violent Disease) to blot the Knowledge of this Doctrine out of the Soul of one single Believer; and* ^c *that since no Man can hold contrary to his Knowledge, nor doubt of what he holds, nor change and innovate without knowing it doth so, it is a manifest Impossibility a whole Age should fall into an Absurdity so inconsistent with the Nature of one single Man. And*

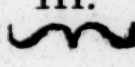
^c p. 78.

^d p. 89.

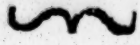
^d *That it is perhaps impossible for one single Man to attempt to deceive Posterity by renouncing Tradition. Which Passages laid together amount to thus much, That it is impossible that Tradition should fail in any one single Person. And though in the Passage last cited he speaks faintly, and with a Perhaps, as if he apprehended some Danger in speaking too peremptorily, yet any one would easily see the Last to be as impossible as any of the rest. And he himself elsewhere, being in the full Career of his bombast Rhetorick, delivers it roundly without Fear or Wit, ^e *Sooner may the Sinews of entire Nature by overstraining crack, and**

^e p. 54.

she

She lose all her Activity and Motion, that is, her self, SECT. III.
 than one single Part of that innumerable Multitude,
 which integrate that vast Testification which we call Tradition, can possibly be violated. 

§. 4. But it may be we deal too hardly with him, and press his Demonstration too far, because he tells us he only intends by it to prove that the Generality of Christians will always adhere to Tradition. But if he intended to prove no more but this, he should then have brought a Demonstration that would have concluded no more; but this concludes of all as well as of the Generality of Christians. A clear Evidence that it is no Demonstration, because it concludes that which is evidently false, That there can be no Apostates or Hereticks. Besides, supposing his Demonstration to conclude only that the Generality of Christians would always adhere to Tradition, this is as plainly confuted by Experience, if there be any Credit to be given to History. St. Hierom tells us, ^a That *Liberius* ^a Chron. Bishop of Rome (for all his particular Title to Infalli-^{ad Ann.} bility built upon Tradition, as Mr. S. speaks, *Coroll.* ^{Christ.} 28.) turned Arian. And that ^b *Arianism* was esta-^{352.} blish'd by the Synod of Arminum, which was a Coun-^{Ad An.} cil more general than that of Trent. And that ^c al-^{363.} c most all the Churches in the whole World under the ^{364.} Names of Peace and of the Emperor, were polluted by Communion with the Arians. Again, That ^d under ^a Advers. the Emperor Constantius (Eusebius and Hippatius ^{Lucifer.} being Consuls) Infidelity was subscribed under the Names of Unity and Faith. And ^e that the whole World ^{Ibid.} groaned, and wonder'd to see it self turned Arian. And he ^a uses this as an Argument to the *Luciferians*, ^a Ibid. to receive into the Church those who had been defiled with the Heresy of Arian, because the Number of those who had kept themselves Orthodox was exceeding small: For (says he) the Synod of Nice, which consisted of above Three hundred Bishops, received Eight Arian Bishops whom they might have cast out without any great loss to the Church. I wonder then how some,

PART
III.

and those the Followers of the Nicene Faith, can think that Three Confessors, (viz. Athanasius, Hilarius, Eusebius) ought not to do that in case of Necessity for the Good and Safety of the whole World, which so many and so excellent Persons did voluntarily. It seems Arianism had prevailed very far, when St. Hierom could not name above Three eminent Persons in the Church who had preserved themselves untainted with it.

^a In Epist. ad Galat. 1. 3. Again, ^a Arius in Alexandria was at first but one Spark; but because it was not presently extinguish'd, it broke out into a Flame which devoured the whole World.

^b Orat. 20. & 21. Gregory Nazianzen ^b likewise tells us to the same Purpose, That the Arian Heresy seized upon the greatest Part of the Church: And, to shew that he knew nothing of Mr. S's Demonstration of the Indefectibility of the Generality of Christians, he asks ^c *Where are those that define the Church by Multitude, and despise the little Flock, &c.* And this Heresy was of a long Continuance, for from its first Rise, which happened in the 20th Year of Constantine, it continued (as Job. Abbas) ^d hath calculated it) 266 Years. And the Pelagian Heresy (if we may believe Bradwardine, one of the great Champions of the Church against it) did in a manner prevail as much as Arianism, as the said Author complains in his Preface to his Book, ^e *That almost the whole World was run after Pelagius into Error.* Will Mr. S. now say, that in the Height of these Heresies the Generality of Christians did firmly adhere to Tradition? If he say they did, let him answer the express Testimonies produced to the contrary: But if they did not, then his Demonstration also fails as to the Generality of Christians. And if the greater Part of Christians may fall off from Tradition, what Demonstration can make it impossible for the lesser to do so? Who will say it is in Reason impossible that a Thousand Persons should relinquish Tradition, though Nine hundred of them have already done it, and though the Remainder be no otherwise secured from doing

^d Chron. ad Annum octavum Mauriti.

^e Cauf. Dei.

doing so, than those were who have actually relin-
 quished it? Now is not this a clear Evidence that
 this which he calls a Demonstration *a priori* is no
 such Thing? Because every Demonstration *a priori*
 must be from Causes which are *necessary*, whereas his
 Demonstration is from *voluntary* Causes. So that
 unless he can prove that *voluntary* Causes are *necessa-*
ry, he shall never demonstrate that it is impossible
 for the Generality of any Company of Men to err,
 who have every one of them free Will, and are
 every one of them liable to Passion and Mistake.

§. 5. From all this it appears, that his whole
Discourse about the Original and Progress of Heresy,
 and the Multitudes of Hereicks in several Ages,
 is as clear a Confutation of his own Demonstration
 as can be desired. The only Thing that he offers
 in that *Discourse*, to prevent this Objection which he
 foresaw it liable to, is this, *It is not* (says he) *to be*
expected but that some Contingencies should have Place,
where a whole Species in a manner is to be wrought
upon; it sufficeth that the Causes to preserve Faith in-
deficiently entire, are as efficacious as those which are
laid for the Preservation of Mankind; the Virtue of
Faith not being to continue longer than Mankind its on-
ly Subject does; and they will easily appear as efficacious
as the other, if we consider the Strength of those Causes
before explicated, and reflect that they are effectively
powerful to make Multitudes daily debar themselves of
those Pleasures which are the Causes of Mankind's
Propagation; and if we look into History for Experi-
ence of what hath passed in the World since the propagating
of Christianity, we shall find more Particulars failing in
propagating their Kind, than their Faith. To which
 I answer.

First, That it may reasonably be expected there
 should be no Contingencies in any Particulars, where
 Causes of actual Will are supposed to be put in all;
 because (as he says truly) *a Cause put actually causing*
cannot but produce its effect. Suppose then constant
 Causes laid in all mankind of an actual Will to speak

PART Truth to the best of their Knowledge, were it not
 III. reasonable to expect that there would be no such
 Contingency to the World's End, as that any man
 should tell a Lye? Nay, it were Madness for any
 man to think any such Contingency should be, sup-
 posing Causes actually causing men alway to speak
 Truth.

Secondly, It is far from Truth, *That the Causes to preserve Faith indefinitely entire, are as efficacious as those which are laid for the Propagation of Mankind.* And whereas he would prove the Strength of these Causes which are laid to preserve Faith, because they are *effectively powerful to make Multitudes daily debar themselves of those Pleasures which are the Causes of Mankind's Propagation*; I hope no Body that hath read the innumerable Complaints which occur in their own Historians, and others of the best and most credible of their own Writers, of more than one Age, concerning the general Viciousness and Debauchery of their Priests and Monks, will be over-forward to believe that all those who debar themselves of lawful Marriage, do abstain from those unlawful Pleasures.

§. 6. But nothing can be more impudent than what he adds, *That if we look into Histories for Experience of what hath pass'd in the World since the first planting of Christianity, we shall find far more Particulars failing in propagating their Kind, than their Faith.* Do any Histories confirm it to have been the Experience of the World, that the far greatest Part of the World did in any Age give over propagating their Kind? But Histories do confirm that the far greatest Part of the Christian World did fall off to *Arianism* and *Pelagianism*; and consequently, as he supposeth, did desert and renounce Tradition. Did ever whole Nations and vast Territories of the World either wholly, or for far the greatest Part of them, take up an Humour against propagating Mankind? And yet both History, and the Experience
 of

of the present Age assures us, that a great Part of **SECT.**
Asia and of *Africa* (where the most flourishing **III.**
 Churches in the World once were) are fallen off from *Christianity*, and become either *Mahometans* or *Heathens*. In *Africk* almost all those vast *Regions* which *Christianity* had from *Heathenism*, *Mahometanism* hath regained from *Christianity*. All the North Part of *Africk* lying along the *Mediterranean* (where *Christianity* flourished once as much as ever it did at *Rome*) is at this Time utterly void of *Christians*, excepting a few *Towns* in the Hands of the *European Princes*. And not to mention all particular Places, the large Region of *Nubia*, which had (as is thought) from the Apostles Time professed the *Christian Faith*, hath within these 150 Years, for want of Ministers (as *Alvarez* ^b tells us) quitted *Christianity*, and is partly revolted to *Heathenism*, partly fallen off to *Mahometanism*. ^{b Hist. Æthiop.} So that it seems, that notwithstanding the *Arguments of Hope and Fear*, the very Teachers of Tradition may fail in a largely extended Church. As for *Asia*, in the Easterly Parts of it, there is not now one *Christian* to Four of what there were 50 Years ago; and in the more Southerly Parts of it (where *Christianity* had taken the deepest Root) the *Christians* are far inferior in Number to the *Idolaters* and *Mahometans*, and do daily decrease. What thinks Mr. S. of all this? Have those *Christian Nations* which are turned *Mahometans* and *Pagans* failed in their Faith or not? If they have, I expect from him clear Instances of more that have failed in propagating their Kind.

§. 7. But besides those who have totally apostatized from *Christianity*, hath not the whole *Greek Church*, with the *Jacobites* and *Nestorians*, and all those other *Sects* which agree with and depend upon these, and which, taken together, are manifoldly

PART. foldly greater than the *Roman Church*; I say,
 III. have not all these renounced Tradition for several
 ~~~~~ Ages? And here in *Europe*, hath not a great Part  
 of *Poland, Hungary, both Germanies, France, and*  
*Switzerland*; Have not the Kingdoms of *Great-*  
*Britain, Denmark, Sweden*, and a considerable  
 Part of *Ireland*, in Mr. S's Opinion, deserted Tra-  
 dition? If I should once see a whole Nation fail  
 because no body would marry and contribute to  
 the Propagating of Mankind; and should find this  
 sullen Humour to prevail in several Nations, and to  
 over-spread vast Parts of the World, I should  
 then in good Earnest think it possible for Man-  
 kind to fail; unless I could shew it impossible for  
 other Nations to do that which I see some to have  
 done, who were every whit as unlikely to have  
 done it. So that whatever Cause he assigns of  
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 Vice or Interest, if these can take Place in whole  
 Nations, and make them renounce Tradition, then  
 where's the *Efficacy of the Causes to preserve Faith*  
*indeficiently entire in any?* For the Demonstration  
 holds as strongly for all Christians as for any.

§ p. 67.

§. 8. Secondly, From these Grounds it would  
 follow that no Christian can live wickedly; be-  
 cause the End of Faith being a good Life, the  
 Arguments of Hope and Fear must in all Reason  
 be as powerful and efficacious Causes of a good  
 Life, as of a true belief. And that his *Demonstra-*  
*tion* proves the one as much as the other, will be  
 evident from his own Reasoning; for he<sup>d</sup> argues  
 in this manner, *Good is the proper Object of the Will;*  
*Good proposed makes the Will to desire that Good, and*  
*consequently the known Means to obtain it: Now in-*  
*finite Goods and Harms sufficiently proposed are of their*  
*own Nature incomparably more powerful Causes to*  
*carry the Will than temporal ones. Since then, when*  
*two Causes are counterpoised, the Lesser, when it comes*  
*to Execution, is no Cause to move the Wills of a World*  
 of

§ p. 62.

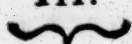
*of Believers to be willing to do that which they judge* SECT.  
*would lose themselves and their Posterity infinite Goods,* III.  
*and bring them infinite Harms, &c. in case a sufficient*  
*Proposal or Application be not wanting, which he tells*  
*us, \* is not wanting, because Christianity urged to* p. 65.

*Execution, gives its Followers a new Life and a new*  
*Nature than which a nearer Application cannot be*  
*imagined:* Doth not this Argument extend to the  
 Lives of Christians, as well as their Belief? So that we  
 may as well infer from these Grounds, that it is im-  
 possible that those who profess Christianity should live  
 contrary to it, as that they should fail to deliver  
 down the Doctrine of Christ; because whatever can  
 be an Inducement and Temptation to any Man to  
 contradict this Doctrine by his practice, may equal-  
 ly prevail upon him to falsify it. For why should  
 Men make any more Scruple of damning themselves  
 and their Posterity by teaching them false Doctrines,  
 than by living wicked Lives? Which are equally  
 pernicious with Heretical Doctrines, not only upon  
 the Account of the bad influence which such Exam-  
 ples of Fathers and Teachers are like to have upon  
 their Scholars, but likewise they are one of the strong-  
 est Arguments in the World to persuade them, that  
 their Teachers do not themselves believe that Religi-  
 on which they teach; for if they did, they would  
 live according to it. Why should any man think,  
 that those Arguments of Hope and Fear which will  
 not prevail upon the Generality of Christians to  
 make them live holy Lives, should be so necessary  
 efficacious to make them so much concerned for the  
 preserving of a right Belief? Nay, we have great  
 Reason to believe that such Persons will endeavour  
 as much as may be, to bend and accommodate their  
 Belief to their Lives. And this is the true Source of  
 those Innovations in Faith for which we challenge  
 the Church of *Rome* which any Man may easily dis-  
 cern, who will but consider how all their new Doc-  
 trines are fitted to a secular Interest, and the grati-  
 fying



PART.

III.



p. 67.

foldly greater than the *Roman Church*; I say, have not all these renounced Tradition for several Ages? And here in *Europe*, hath not a great Part of *Poland, Hungary, both Germanies, France, and Switzerland*; Have not the Kingdoms of *Great-Britain, Denmark, Sweden*, and a considerable Part of *Ireland*, in Mr. S's Opinion, deserted Tradition? If I should once see a whole Nation fail because no body would marry and contribute to the Propagating of Mankind; and should find this sullen Humour to prevail in several Nations, and to over-spread vast Parts of the World, I should then in good Earnest think it possible for Mankind to fail; unless I could shew it impossible for other Nations to do that which I see some to have done, who were every whit as unlikely to have done it. So that whatever Cause he assigns of *Heresy* as *Pride, Ambition, Lust*, or any other Vice or Interest, if these can take Place in whole Nations, and make them renounce Tradition, then where's the *Efficacy of the Causes to preserve Faith indefinitely entire in any*? For the Demonstration holds as strongly for all Christians as for any.

p. 62.

§. 8. *Secondly*, From these Grounds it would follow that no Christian can live wickedly; because the End of Faith being a good Life, the Arguments of Hope and Fear must in all Reason be as powerful and efficacious Causes of a good Life, as of a true belief. And that his *Demonstration* proves the one as much as the other, will be evident from his own Reasoning; for he<sup>a</sup> argues in this manner, *Good is the proper Object of the Will; Good proposed makes the Will to desire that Good, and consequently the known Means to obtain it: Now infinite Goods and Harms sufficiently proposed are of their own Nature incomparably more powerful Causes to carry the Will than temporal ones. Since then, when two Causes are counterpoised, the Lesser, when it comes to Execution, is no Cause to move the Wills of a World*

of

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the Church of *Rome* which any Man may easily dis-  
cern, who will but consider how all their new Doc-  
trines are fitted to a secular Interest, and the grati-  
fying

PART. fying of that inordinate Appetite after Riches and  
 III. Dominion which reigns in the Court of *Rome*, and  
 in the upper Part of the Clergy of that Church.

SECT. IV. *The Second Answer to his Demonstration.*

§. 1. **S**Econdly, The main Grounds of his Demonstration are apparently false: For,

*First*, This Demonstration supposeth that the Generality of Christian Parents in all Ages perfectly understood the Doctrine of Christ, and did not mistake any Part of it; that they remember it perfectly, and that they were faithful and diligent to instruct their Children in it; which is as contrary to Experience as that the Generality of Christians are knowing and honest. It supposeth likewise, that this Doctrine, and every substantial part of it, was received and remembred by the Generality of Children as it was taught, and was understood perfectly by them without the least material Mistake: So he tells

p. 53.

us, *That the Substance of Faith comes clad in such plain Matters of Fact, that the most stupid Man living cannot possibly be ignorant of it.* But whether this be reasonable to be supposed or no, may easily be determined, not only from every Man's own Experience of the World, but from a more advantageous Instance of the Experience of the first Age of Christianity. Was there ever a more knowing and diligent Teacher of this Doctrine than our Saviour? And yet his Disciples fell into many Mistakes concerning it: So that in order to the certain propagating of it, the Wisdom of God thought it requisite to endue even those who had learned this Doctrine from himself with an infallible Spirit, by which they might be led into all Truth, and secured from Error and Mistake; which had been unnecessary, had it been impossible for them to mistake this Doctrine. The Apostles, who taught the World by an infallible Spirit, and with infinitely more Advantage than ordinary Parents can teach their Children, yet in all the



the Churches which they planted they found Christi-<sup>SECT.</sup>  
 ans very apt to mistake and pervert their Doctrine, IV.  
 as appears by their frequent Complaints in most of  
 their Epistles. Nay, the Apostle chargeth the Ge-  
 nerality of the *Hebrews*<sup>a</sup> with such a Degree of Dul-<sup>a</sup> Heb. 5.  
 ness and Stupidity, that after fitting time and means<sup>11, 12.</sup>  
 of Instruction they were still ignorant of the very  
 Principles of Christianity : So he tells them, *That*  
*when for the time they ought to be Teachers of others,*  
*they had need that one should teach them again which be*  
*the first Principles of the Oracles of God.* And St. Hi-  
 erom tells us, <sup>b</sup> *That the Primitive Churches were taint-*<sup>b</sup> Advers.  
*ed with many gross Errors whilst the Apostles were* Lucifer.  
*alive, and the Blood of Christ yet warm in Judea.*  
 But it may be there have been better Teachers since,  
 and Children are more apt to learn now than Men  
 were then. Who knows how the World may be  
 changed ?

§. 2. Secondly, This Demonstration supposeth the  
 Hopes and Fears which Christian Religion applies to  
 Mens Minds to be certain and necessary Causes of  
 actual Will in Men to adhere to the Doctrine of  
 Christ ; and consequently that they must necessarily  
 adhere to it. That he supposeth them to be *necessa-*  
*ry*, I have his own Word for it ; for he tells<sup>c</sup> us,<sup>c</sup> p. 75.  
*That he hath endeavoured to demonstrate the Indefec-*  
*tibility of Tradition as the proper and necessary Effect*  
*of those Causes which preserve and continue Tradition on*  
*foot, and what those Causes are he told us before,*  
<sup>a</sup> *That they are Hopes and Fears strongly applied.* But<sup>d</sup> p. 60.  
 I hope that the Indefectibility of Tradition cannot  
 be a *necessary Effect* of the strong Application of those  
 Hopes and Fears, unless those Hopes and Fears be a  
*necessary Cause* of that Effect. And indeed this is suf-  
 ficiently implied in his saying *that they are the Causes*  
*of actual Will* in Christians to adhere to Tradition.  
 For if these *Causes of actual Will* be constant (as he  
 must suppose) then they are certain and necessary  
 and infallible Causes of adhering to this Doctrine.  
 For

PART For whatever is in Act is necessary while it is so, and  
 III. if it be constantly in Act, the Effect is always necessary. But what a wild Supposition is this, That Moral Motives and Arguments working upon a free Principle, the Will of Man, do necessarily produce their Effect? Is it necessary that the Hopes of Heaven and the Fears of Hell should keep Christians constant to the Doctrine of Christ? And is it not as necessary that these Arguments should prevail upon them to the Practice of it? It is in vain to go about to demonstrate that all Men must be Good who have sufficient Arguments propounded to them, when Experience tells us the contrary. Nay, it is in Reason impossible that Moral Arguments should be of a necessary and infallible Efficacy, because they are always propounded to a free Agent, who may chuse whether he will yield to them or not. Indeed it is always reasonable that Men should yield to them, and if they be reasonable they will; but so long as they are free, it can never be infallibly certain that they will. And if Men be not free, it is no Virtue at all in them to be wrought upon by these Arguments. For what Virtue can it be in any Man to entertain the Christian Doctrine, and adhere to it, and live accordingly, if he does all this necessarily, *that is*, whether he will or no, and can no more chuse whether he will do so or not, than whether he will see the Light when the Sun shines upon his Eyes, or whether he will hear a Sound when all the Bells in the Town are ringing in his Ears, or (to use Mr. S's own Similitudes) whether he will *feel Heat, Cold, Pain, Pleasure, or any other material Quality that affects his Senses*. We see then how unreasonable his Suppositions are, and yet without these Grounds his Demonstration falls: For if it be possible that Christians may mistake or forget the Doctrine of Christ, or any Part of it, or be defective in Diligence to instruct others in it; or if it be possible that the Will of Man which is free, may  
 not

not be necessarily and infallibly swayed by the Argu-<sup>SECT.</sup>ments of Hope and Fear; then it is possible that <sup>IV.</sup> Tradition may fail. And is not this a good Demon-  
stration which supports itself upon such Principles as do directly affront the constant Experience, and the clearest Reason of Mankind?

§. 3. And here I cannot but take Notice how inconsistent he is to himself in laying the Grounds of Tradition's Certainty. In one Part of his Book he tells us<sup>a</sup>, ' That Tradition hath for its Basis the best' P. 53.  
' Nature in the Universe, that is, Man's; not according to his moral Part, defectible by reason of Original Corruption; nor yet his Intellectuals, darkly groping in the Pursuit of Science, &c. but according to those Faculties in him perfectly and necessarily subject to the operations and strokes of Nature, that is, his Eyes, Ears, Handling, and the direct Impression of Knowledge, as naturally and necessarily issuing from the affecting those Senses, as it is to feel Heat, Cold, Pain, Pleasure, or any other material Quality.' So that according to this Discourse, the *Basis of Tradition* is not *Man's Nature* considered as *Moral*, and capable of *Intellectual Reflection*; for in this Consideration it is *dark* and *defectible*: But *Man's Nature* considered only as capable of *direct sensitive Knowledge*, as acting *naturally and necessarily*. Which is to say, That Tradition is founded in the Nature of Man considered not as a Man but a Brute; under which Consideration, I see no Reason why he should call it *the best Nature in the Universe*. But now, how will he reconcile this Discourse with the *Grounds* of his *Demonstrations*? Where he tells us, That the Stability of Tradition is founded in the *Arguments of Hope and Fear*, the Objects of which being future and at a Distance, cannot work upon a Man immediately by *direct Impressions* upon his *Senses*, but must work upon him by way of *Intellectual Reflections* and *Consideration*. For I hope he will not deny but that  
the



PART the *Arguments of Hope and Fear* work upon Man  
 III. according to his moral and intellectual Part,  
 else how are they Arguments? And if Man  
 according to his *moral Part* be (as he says) *defectible*,  
 how can the *Indefectibility* of Tradition be founded  
 in those Arguments which work upon Man only ac-  
 cording to his *moral Part*? I have purposely all a-  
 long (both for the Reader's Ease and mine own) ne-  
 glected to take notice of several of his Inconsisten-  
 cies; but these are such clear and transparent Con-  
 tradictions, that I could do no less than make an Ex-  
 ample of them.

## SECT. V.

§. I. **T**HIRDLY, This Demonstration is confu-  
 ted by clear and undeniable *Instances* to  
 the contrary. I will mention but *Two*.

*First*, The Tradition of the one true God, which  
 was the easiest to be preserved of any Doctrine in the  
 World, being short and plain, planted in every  
 Man's Nature, and perfectly suited to the Reason  
 of Mankind. And yet this Tradition, not having  
 past through many Hands (by reason of the long  
 Age of Man) was so defaced and corrupted, that  
 the World did lapse into Polytheism and Idolatry.  
 Now a Man that were so hardy as to demonstrate a-  
 gainst matter of Fact, might by a stronger demon-  
 stration than Mr. S's, prove that though it be cer-  
 tain this Tradition hath failed, yet it was impossible  
 it should fail; as *Zeno* demonstrated the Impossibili-  
 ty of Motion against *Diogenes* walking before his  
 Eyes. For the Doctrine of the one true God *was*  
*settled in the Heart of Noah, and firmly believed by*  
*him to be the Way to Happiness, and the contradicting or*  
*deserting of this to be the Way to Misery.* And this  
 Doctrine was by him so taught to his Children, who  
 were encouraged by these Motives to adhere to this  
 Doctrine, and to propagate it to their Children, and  
 were deterred by them from relinquishing it. And this  
 was

*was in all Ages the Persuasion of the Faithful.* SECT. V. Now the *Hopes of Happiness, and the Fears of Misery strongly applied, are the Causes of actual Will.* Besides, the Thing was feasible, or within their Power; that is, what they were bred to was knowable by them, and that much more easily than any other Doctrine whatsoever, being short, and plain, and natural. This put, it follows certainly that a great Number in each Age would continue to hold themselves, and teach their Children as themselves had been taught, that is, would follow and stick to this Tradition of the one true God, as it doth that a Cause put actually causing produceth its Effect. Actually I say; for since the Cause is put, and the Patient disposed, it follows inevitably that the Cause is put still actually causing. This Demonstration which concludes an apparent Falshood, hath the whole Strength of Mr. S's, and several Advantages beyond it. For the Doctrine conveyed by this Tradition is the most important, being the first Principle of all Religion; the Danger of corrupting it as great, the Facility of preserving it much greater, than of the Christian Doctrine, for the Causes before-mentioned. And yet, after all, it signifies nothing against certain Experience, and unquestionable Matter of Fact; only it sufficiently shews the Vanity of Mr. S's pretended Demonstration, built upon the same or weaker Grounds.

§. 2. Secondly, The other Instance shall be in the Greek Church, who received the Christian Doctrine as entire from the Apostles, and had as great an Obligation to propagate it truly to Posterity, and the same Fears and Hopes strongly applied to be the actual Causes of Will; in a Word, all the same Arguments and Causes to preserve and continue Tradition on foot, which the Roman Church had: And yet, to the utter Confusion of Mr. S's Demonstration, Tradition hath failed among them. For as Speculators, they deny the Procession of the

PART  
III.

*Holy Ghost from the Son; and as Testifiers, they dis-*  
own any such Doctrine to have been delivered to  
them by the precedent Age, or to any other Age of  
their Church by the Apostles as the Doctrine of  
Christ.

§. 3. To this Instance of the Greek Church, be-  
cause Mr. *White* hath offered something by way  
of Answer, I shall here consider it. He tells us,  
\* Apology for Tradition; *That the Plea of the Greek Church is Non-Tradition; alledging only this, That their Fathers did not deliver the Doctrine of the Procession of the Holy Ghost; not that they say the contrary, which clearly demonstrates there are no opposite Traditions between them and us.* But this was not the Thing Mr. *White* was concerned to do, to demonstrate there were no opposite Traditions between the Greeks and the *Latins*, but to secure his main Demonstration of the Impossibility of Tradition's failing against this Instance. For that the Greeks have no such Tradition as this, *That the Holy Ghost proceeds from the Son*, is as good Evidence of the Failure of Tradition as if they had a positive Tradition, *That he proceeds only from the Father*; especially if we consider that they<sup>b</sup> charge the *Latin* Church with Innovation in this Matter, and say that the Addition of that Clause, *of the Procession from the Son also*, is a Corruption of the ancient Faith, and a devilish Invention. Why then does Mr. *White* go about to baffle so material an Objection (and, I fear, his own Conscience likewise) by a pitiful Evasion instead of a solid Answer? What tho' there be no opposite Traditions between the Greek and *Latin* Church, yet if their Faith be opposite, will it not from hence follow that Tradition hath failed in one of them? I wonder that Mr. *White*, who hath so very well confuted the Infallibility of Popes and Councils, and thereby undermined the very Foundation of that Religion, should not  
by

\* Apology  
for Tradition;  
on, P. 51.

<sup>b</sup> Phoc.  
Ep. 7.



by the same Light of Reason discover the Fond-  
 ness of his own Opinion concerning the Infalli-  
 bility of Oral Tradition, which hath more and  
 greater Absurdities in it than that which he con-  
 futes. And to shew Mr. *White* the Absurdity of  
 it, I will apply his Demonstration of the Infalli-  
 bility of *Christian* Tradition in general, to the  
*Greek Church* in particular; by which every one  
 will see that it does as strongly prove the Impossi-  
 bility of Tradition's failing in the *Greek Church*,  
 as in the *Roman Catholick*, as they are pleased to  
 call it. His Demonstration is this, ' Christ  
 ' commanded his Apostles to preach to all the  
 ' World, and lest any one should doubt of the  
 ' Effect, he sent his Spirit into them to bring to  
 ' their Remembrance what he had taught them;  
 ' which Spirit did not only give them a Power  
 ' to do what he inclined them to, but did cause  
 ' them actually to do it.' I cannot but take notice  
 by the way, of the ill consequence of this, which  
 is, that Men may doubt whether those who are  
 to teach the Doctrine of Christ will remember  
 it, and teach it to others, unless they have that  
 extraordinary and efficacious Assistance of the Holy  
 Ghost which the Apostles had: If this be true, his  
 Demonstration is at an end, for he cannot plead that  
 this Assistance hath been continued ever since the  
 Apostles. He proceeds, ' The Apostle preached  
 ' this Doctrine; the Nations understood it, lived ac-  
 ' cording to it, and valued it as that which was ne-  
 ' cessary to them and their Posterity, and incom-  
 ' parably beyond any Thing else.' All this I sup-  
 pose done to and by the *Greeks* as well as any other  
 Nation. ' These Things being put, it cannot en-  
 ' ter into any Man's Understanding, but that the  
 ' Christian [*Greeks*] of the first Age, being the  
 ' Scholars of the Apostles, could and would ear-  
 ' nestly commend the Christian Doctrine to their  
 ' Posterity; if so, it is evident that they did.

PART. ' So that the Continuance of Purity of the Faith in  
 III. ' the [*Greek*] Church is founded upon this, That  
 ~~~~~ ' Fathers always delivered the same Doctrine to  
 ' their Children which they had received from
 ' their Fathers, and did believe it under this very
 ' Notion and Title as received; nor could any one
 ' [*of that Church*] deliver another Doctrine under
 ' this Title, but he would be convinced of a Lye
 ' by the rest; and if the whole [*Greek*] Church
 ' should endeavour to deliver a new Doctrine un-
 ' der that Title, [*and there's the same Reason if*
 ' *they should leave out any Article of the Old Doc-*
 ' *trine*] that whole Age would be in their Consci-
 ' ences condemned of Perfidiousness and Parricide.
 ' Now this is as impossible as it is that all Mankind
 ' should conspire to kill themselves.' And he af-
 afterwards ^a gives the Reason why it is so impossible
 that Tradition should fail, and it is a very bold and
 saucy one, *That if the Tradition of the Christian*
Faith be no more firm than the Course of the Sun and
Moon, and the Propagation of Mankind, then God
hath shewn himself an unskilful Artificer. What is
 there in all this Demonstration, which may not be
 accommodated to the *Greek* Church with as much
 Force and Advantage as to the *Catholicks*? Unless
 he can shew that it is very possible that all the Men
 in *Greece* may conspire to kill themselves, but yet ab-
 solutely impossible that all the Men in the World
 should do so; which I am sure he cannot shew,
 unless he can demonstrate that though it be possible
 for a Million of as wise Men as any are to be found
 in the World together, to conspire to do a foolish
 Action, yet it is impossible that a Hundred Milli-
 ons not one Jot wise than the other, should agree
 together to the doing of it.

^a Ibid.
 Sect. 5.

§. 4. From all this it appears, That Mr. *White's*
 Answer to this Objection doth not signify any
 Thing to his Purpose. For if the *Procession of*
the Holy Ghost was part of Christ's Doctrine, then
 it

it was delivered by the Apostles to the Greek SECT. Church; if so, they could not fail to deliver it V. down to the next Age, and that to the next and so on; but it seems they have failed. Where then is the force of Hopes and Fears strongly applied? Where are the certain Causes of actual Will to adhere to this Doctrine? Why is not the Effect produced, the Causes being put actually causing? If the Apostles delivered this Doctrine, Oral Tradition is so clear and unmistakable, and ^c brings down Faith clad in ^{p. 53.} such plain Matters of Fact, that the most stupid Man ^{& 54.} living, much less the Greeks, that were the Flower of Mankind) could not possibly be ignorant of it; nay ^a it exceeds all the Power of Nature to blot knowledge, ^{Ibid.} thus fixed out of the Soul of one single Believer, (much more of so vast a Church). And ^b since no Man ^{p. 78.} can hold contrary to his Knowledge, or doubt of what he holds, nor change and innovate without knowing he did so, 'tis a manifest Impossibility a whole Church should in any Age fall into an Absurdity so inconsistent with the Nature of one single Man. And ^c since ^{p. 86.} 'tis natural for every Man to speak Truth, and Grace is to perfect Nature in whatever is good in it, it follows that one truly Christian Heart is far more fixed to Veracity, than others not imbued with those heavenly Tenets; and consequently that a multitude of such must incomparably exceed in Point of testifying, the same Number of others unfortified by Christ's Doctrine. And since ^a such a Thought cannot enter into ^{p. 89.} the most depraved Nature, as to harm another without any Good to himself, and yet this must be if we put Christian Fathers mis-teaching Children unreceived Doctrines for received (and I hope, for the same Reason, received Doctrines for unreceived) contrary to their Knowledge. For supposing Sanctity in the (Greek) Church, (and why may not we as well as in the Latin, That is, that Multitudes in it make Heaven their first Love, and look on spiritual Goods

PART as their main Concern, &c. it follows, that had the
 III. Fathers of that Church, in any Age, consented to mis-
 ~~~~~ lead their Posterity from what themselves (not only)  
 conceited (but knew) to be true, they should do the most  
 extreme Harm imaginable to others, without any the  
 least Good to themselves; which is perhaps impossible in  
 one single Man, more in few, but infinitely in a Multi-  
 tude, especially of good Men.

§. 5. Thus I might apply the rest of his ranting  
 Rhetorick (but that I am weary of transcribing it)  
 \* p. 90. 91. concerning <sup>a</sup> the natural Love of Parents to their Chil-  
 dren (unless we suppose the Greek Church destitute  
 of it) which must needs engage them to use the  
 Means proper to bring them to Heaven, and save  
 them from Hell: As also concerning the natural Care  
 Men have of not losing their Credit by telling pernicious  
 Lyes. And, not to omit the best Part of his De-  
 monstration, <sup>b</sup> (which was therefore prudently re-  
 served to the last Place) I might likewise shew how  
 the Principles of each Science, Arithmetick, Geometry,  
 Logick, Nature, Morality, Historical Prudence, Poli-  
 ticks, Metaphysicks, Divinity, and last of all the new  
 Science of Controversy (as he calls it) or the blessed  
 Art of eternal wrangling and disputing (the first  
 Principle whereof (he tells us) is, That Tradition is  
 certain) do all contribute to shew the Certainty of  
 Tradition, that is the Impossibility that any Part of  
 Christ's Doctrine should fail in the Greek Church any  
 more than in the Latin. And surely Arithmetick,  
 Geometry, Logick, Natural Philosophy, Metaphysicks,  
 &c. will all stand up for the Greek Church in this  
 Quarrel; for considering that Greece was the Place  
 where the Arts and Sciences were born and bred, it  
 is not to be imagined that they should be so disin-  
 genuous and unnatural, as not to contribute their  
 best Assistance to the Service of their Country.

§. 6. But it may be the Greeks cannot so justly  
 pretend to Oral Tradition as the Latins. What if  
 St. Peter, the Head of the Apostles thought fit to  
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share Scripture and Tradition between these Two SECT. V.  
Churches, and laying his Left Hand on the *Greek*  
Church, and his Right on the *Latin*, was pleased to

confer *the great Blessing of Oral Tradition* upon the *Latin* Church? Which being to be the Seat of Infallibility, it was but fitting that she should be furnished with this infallible Way of conveying the Christian Doctrine. And therefore it may be, that as the *Scriptures* of the New Testament were left in *Greek*, so *Oral Tradition* was delivered down only in *Latin*. This, I confess, is not altogether without some Shew of Reason: Mr. S. may do well to take the Matter into his deeper Consideration; he hath in his Time improved as weak Probabilities as these into lusty Demonstrations. And if he could but demonstrate this, it would very much weaken the Force of this *Instance* of the *Greek* Church; otherwise (for ought I see) this Instance will hold good against *him*; and whatever he can say for the Impossibility of Tradition's failing in the *Latin* Church, may all be said of the *Greek* Church; if he will but grant that the Apostles preached the same Doctrine to them both; that the Arguments of Hope and Fear which this Doctrine contains in it, were applied as strongly to the *Greeks* as the *Latins*. And yet notwithstanding all this, Tradition hath plainly failed in the *Greek* Church. Let him now assign the Age wherein so vast a Number of Men conspired to leave out the *Article* of the *Procession of the Holy Ghost*, and shew how it was possible a whole Age could conspire together to damn their Posterity, or how the Faith of immediate Forefathers might be altered, without any such Conspiracy, and we are ready to satisfy him how the Doctrine of the *Latin* Church might be corrupted and altered, and to tell him punctually in what Age it was done. And until he do this, I would intreat him to trouble us no more with those canting Questions (wherein yet the whole Force of his Demonstration lies) How is it

PART possible a whole Age should conspire to change the  
 III. Doctrine of their Forefathers? And in what Age  
 was this done? For if it be reasonable to demand  
 of us, in order to the overthrowing of his Demon-  
 stration, to assign the particular Age wherein the  
*Latin Church* conspired to change the ancient Doc-  
 trine; with the same Reason we require of him, in order  
 to the maintaining of his Demonstration, to name the  
 particular Age wherein the *Greek Church* conspired  
 to alter the Doctrine of Christ, (which was undoubt-  
 edly in the first Age truly delivered to them by the  
 Apostles) and also to shew from the rational Force  
 and Strength of Tradition, how it is more impossi-  
 ble for the *whole Church* to have failed in transmit-  
 ting the Doctrine of Christ down to us, or to have  
 conspired to the altering of it, than for such a Mul-  
 titude of Christians, as is the vast Body of the *Greek Church*. If Mr. *S.* or Mr. *White* shew this, they  
 do something; otherwise, I must tell them, that un-  
 less they can manage these *pretty Things* they call  
*Demonstrations* better, they must shortly either quit  
 their Reason, or their Religion; or else return to the  
 honest old *Mumpsimus* of the Infallibility of the  
 Church from an extraordinary and immediate Affis-  
 tance of the Holy Ghost: or (to make the Business  
 short, and stop all Gaps with one Bush) come over  
 to the *Jesuits*, and acknowledge the *Pope's Infallibi-*  
*lity* both in Matters of *Faith* and *Fact*; by which  
 Means they may reconcile themselves to *him*, and  
 prevent that direful Stroke which threatens them  
 from *Rome*, and is ready to cut them off from the  
 Body of the *Traditionary Church*. And thus I have  
 done with his *First Demonstration*; and I take it for  
 a good Sign that the Popish Cause is at a very low  
 Ebb, when such *Stuff* as this must be called *Demon-*  
*stration*.



SECT. VI. Mr. S's *Demonstration a posteriori*.

§. 1. **I** Come now to his *Demonstration a posteriori*, which, although it fall of it self if the *Demonstration a priori* fail, yet because it hath some peculiar Absurdities of its own, I shall consider it by it self as well as with relation to the other.

§. 2. Before he comes to lay it down with the *Grounds* of it, according to his usual Fashion, he premiseth something as yielded by Protestants, which, in his Sense, no Protestant ever granted. Just so he dealt with us before concerning the Scriptures, saying, That by them the Protestants *must mean unsensed Letters and Characters*. But let us see what it is *That* p. 76. *this Demonstration a posteriori seems a needless Endeavour against the Protestants, who yield that those Points in which we agree, as the Trinity, Incarnation, &c. came down by this way of Tradition; And this (he saith) no Protestant ever denied. And then he asks, Whether the same Virtue of Tradition would not have been as powerful to bring down other Points in which we do not agree, had any such been?* Now if he speak any thing to his own Purpose, he must suppose Protestants to yield that all those Points wherein we are agreed, were conveyed down to us solely by Oral Tradition without Writing: But this all Protestants deny. So that That only which would avail his Cause against us, is to shew, that those Points wherein we differ, have not only come down to us by Oral Teaching, but that they are likewise contained in Scripture, without which, we say, we can have no sufficient Certainty and Assurance at this Distance, that they were the Doctrine of Christ, and that they were not either totally innovated, or else corrupted in the Conveyance from what they were at first. And if he can shew this concerning any Point in Difference, I promise to yield it to him.

§. 3. I

PART

III.

P. 77, 78.

§. 3. I come now to his *Demonstration*, which I shall set down in his own Words, with the *Principles* upon which it relies. ‘ ‘ The effect then we will pitch upon, and avow to be the proper one of such a Cause, is the present Persuasion of Traditionary Christians (or Catholicks) that their Faith hath descended from Christ and his Apostles uninterruptedly, which we find most firmly rooted in their Heart; and the Existence of this Persuasion we affirm to be impossible, without the Existence of Tradition’s ever Indeficiency to beget it. To prove this, I lay this first Principle, That Age which holds her Faith thus delivered from the Apostles, neither can it self have changed any thing in it, nor know or doubt that any Age since the Apostles had changed or innovated therein. The second Principle shall be this: No Age could innovate any thing, and withal deliver that very thing to Posterity as received from Christ by continual Succession.’ The Sum of which is this, That because a present Multitude of Christians (*viz.* the *Roman Church*) are persuaded, that Christ’s Doctrine hath descended to them solely by an uninterrupted Oral Tradition, therefore this Persuasion is an Effect which cannot be attributed to any other Cause but the Indeficiency of Oral Tradition. For if neither the present Age, nor any Age before, could make any Change or Innovation, then the Persuasion of the present Age is a plain Demonstration that this Doctrine was always the same, and consequently that Tradition cannot fail.

§. 4. In answer to this, I shall endeavour to make good these *Four Things*.

*First*, That these *Principles* wholly rely upon the Truth of the *Grounds* of his *Demonstration a priori*.

*Secondly*, That these *Principles* are not sufficiently proved by him.

*Thirdly*, That Doctrines and Practices, which must be acknowledged to have been innovated, have

have made the same Pretence to uninterrupted Tradition. SECT. VII.

*Fourthly*, That it is not the present Persuasion of the Church of *Rome* (whom he calls the Traditionary Christians) nor ever was, that their Faith hath descended to them solely by Oral Tradition. If I can now make good these *Four* Things, I hope his Demonstration is at an end.

SECT. VII. *The First Answer to his second Demonstration.*

§. 1. **T**HAT these *Principles* wholly rely upon the Truth of the *Grounds* of his *Demonstration a priori*. For if the Doctrine of Christ was either imperfectly taught in any Age, or mistaken by the Learners, or any part of it forgotten (as it seems the whole *Greek* Church have forgot that fundamental Point of the *Procession of the Holy Ghost*, as the *Roman* Church accounts it) or if the Arguments of Hope and Fear be not necessary Causes of actual Will to adhere to Tradition, then there may have been Changes and Innovations in any Age, and yet Men may pretend to have followed Tradition. But I have shewn, that Ignorance and Negligence and Mistake, and Pride, and Lust, and Ambition, and any other Vice or Interest, may hinder those Causes from being effectual to preserve Tradition entire and uncorrupted. And when they do so, it is not to be expected that those Persons who innovate and change the Doctrine, should acknowledge that their new Doctrines are contrary to the Doctrine of Christ; but that they should at first advance them as pious, and after they have prevailed and gained general Entertainment; then impudently affirm that they were the very Doctrines which Christ deliver'd which they may very securely do, when they have it in their Power to burn all that shall deny it.

§. 2. I will give a clear *Instance* of the Possibility of this in the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation*, by shewing



**PART.** ing how this might easily come in, in the Ninth or  
**III.** Tenth Age after Christ. We will suppose then that  
 about this Time, when universal ignorance, and the  
 genuine Daughter of it, (call her Devotion or Superstition) had overspread the World, and the Generality of People were strongly inclined to believe strange Things; and even the greatest Contradictions were recommended to them under the Notion of Mysteries, being told by their Priests and Guides, that the more contradictory any thing is to Reason, the greater Merit there is in believing it: I say, let us suppose, that in this State of Things one or more of the most Eminent then in the Church, either out of Design, or out of superstitious Ignorance and Mistake of the Sense of our Saviour's Words used in the Consecration of the Sacrament, should advance this new Doctrine, that the Words of Consecration, *This is my Body*, are not to be understood by any kind of *Trope* (as the like Forms in Scripture are, as *I am the Vine*, *I am the Door*, which are plain *Tropes*;) but being used about this great Mystery of the Sacrament ought in all Reason to be supposed to contain in them some notable Mystery; which they will do, if they be understood of a real Change of the Substance of Bread and Wine, made by virtue of these Words in the real Body and Blood of our Saviour. And in all this, I suppose nothing but what is so far from being impossible, that it is too usual for Men, either out of Ignorance or Interest, to advance new Opinions in Religion. And such a Doctrine as this was very likely to be advanced by the ambitious Clergy of that Time, as a probable means to draw in the People to a greater Veneration of them; which advantage Mr. *Rusworth* seems to be very sensible of, when he tells us That the power of the Priest in this particular is *such a Privilege, as if all the learned Clerks that ever lived since the beginning of the World should have studied to*  
*raise,*

• Dial. 1.  
 Sect. 4.

raise, advance, and magnify some one state of Men to the highest pitch of Reverence and Eminency, they could never (without special Light from Heaven) have thought of any thing comparable to this. I am of his Mind, that it was a very notable Device, but (I am apt to think) invented without any special Light from Heaven. Nor was such a Doctrine less likely to take and prevail among the People in an Age prodigiously ignorant, and strongly inclined to Superstition, and thereby well prepared to receive the grossest Absurdities under the Notion of Mysteries; especially if they were such as might seem to conciliate a great Honour and Reverence to the Sacrament. Now supposing such a Doctrine as this, so fitted to the Humour and Temper of the Age, to be once asserted, either by chance or out of design, it would take like Wild-fire; especially if by some one or more who bore sway in the Church, it were but recommended with convenient Gravity and Solemnity. And although Mr. *Rushworth* says, <sup>d</sup> It is impossible <sup>Dial. 3.</sup> that the Authority of one Man should sway so much in <sup>Sect. 7.</sup> the World, because (says he) surely the Devil himself would rather help the Church, than permit so little Pride among Men; yet I am not so thoroughly satisfied with this cunning Reason: For though he delivers it confidently, and with a surely, yet I make some doubt whether the Devil would be so forward to help the Church; nay, on the contrary, I am inclined to think that he would rather chuse to connive at this humble and obsequious Temper in Men, in order to the Overthrow of Religion, than cross a design so dear to him by unseasonable Temptations to Pride: So that notwithstanding Mr. *Rushworth's* Reason, it seems very likely that such a Doctrine, in such an Age, might easily be propagated by the Influence and Authority, of one or a few great Persons in the Church. For nothing can be more suitable to the easy and passive Temper of superstitious Ignorance,

PART. Ignorance, than to entertain such a Doctrine with  
 III. all imaginable Greediness, and to maintain it with a  
 proportionable Zeal. And if there be any wiser

than the rest, who make Objections against it, as if this Doctrine were new and full of Contradictions, they may easily be born down by the stream, and by the Eminency, and Authority, and pretended Sanctity of those who are the Heads of this Innovation. And when this Doctrine is generally swallowed, and all that oppose it are looked upon and punished as Hereticks, then it is seasonable to maintain that this Doctrine was the Doctrine of Forefathers; to which End it will be sufficient to those who are willing to have it true, to bend two or three Sayings of the Ancients to that Purpose. And as for the Contradictions contained in this Doctrine, it was but telling the People then (as they do in effect now) that Contradictions ought to be no scruple in the way of Faith; that the more impossible any thing is; 'tis the fitter to be believed; that it is not Praise-worthy to believe plain Possibilities, but this is the Gallantry and heroical Power of Faith, this is the way to oblige God Almighty for ever to us, to believe flat and downright Contradictions: For God

• Dial. 1. requires at the People's Hands (as Mr. Rushworth<sup>c</sup> tells  
 Sect. 4. us) a Credulity of things above and beyond Nature; nay, beyond all the Fables, be it spoken with Respect, that ever Man invented. After this Doctrine hath proceeded thus far, and by the most inhuman Severities and Cruelties suppress'd Dissenters, or in a good Measure rooted them out; then, if they please, even this new Word *Transubstantiation* may pretend also to Antiquity, and in time be confidently vouch'd for a Word used by Christians in all Ages, and transmitted down to them by those from whom they received the Doctrine of the Sacrament as a *Term of Art* appendant to it. And when a superstitious Church and designing Governors have once gained

this



this Post, and by means of this enormous Article of SECT. *Transubstantiation* have sufficiently debauched the VII. Minds of Men, and made a breach in their Understandings wide enough for the entertaining of any Error, though ever so gross and senseless; then innovations come in a main and by Sholes; and the more absurd and unreasonable any thing is, it is for that very Reason the more proper matter for an Article of Faith. And if any of these innovations be objected against, as contrary to former Belief and Practice, it is but putting forth a lusty Act of Faith, and believing another Contradiction, that tho' they be contrary, yet they are the same.

§. 3. And there is nothing in all this but what is agreeable both to History and Experience. For that the ninth and tenth Ages, and those which followed them till the Reformation, were thus prodigiously ignorant and superstitious, is confirmed by the unanimous Consent of all Histories; and even by those Writers, that have been the greatest Pillars of their own Religion. And Experience tells us, that in what Age soever there are a great Company of superstitious People, there will never be wanting a few crafty Fellows to make use of this easy and pliable Humour to their own Ends. Now that this was the State of those Ages of the Church, will be evident to any from these Testimonies. *Platina*<sup>c</sup> In Vit. writes of Pope *Romanus*, that he null'd the Acts of *Romani*, his Predecessors *Stephanus*. For (says he) these Popes *Papæ* 117: minded nothing else but how they might extinguish both A. C. 900: the Name and Dignity of their Predecessors. And if so, who can doubt but that these Popes who made it their Business to destroy the very Memory of their Ancestors, would be very little careful to preserve the Doctrine of Forefathers. But what the Care of those Times was in this particular, may be conjectured from what *Onuphrius*<sup>b</sup> says by way of <sup>b</sup> In *Platin.* Confutation of that Passage in *Platina*, concerning Pope

PART. Pope *Joan's* reading publicly at *Rome* at her first  
 III. coming thither. *This* (says he) *is utterly false, for*

*there was nothing that they were less solicitous about in those Times, than to furnish the City with any publick Teachers. And the Time which Onuphrius speaks of, was much about the beginning of the tenth Cen-*

• An. 906. tury. *Phil. Burgomensis* \* says, ' It happened in  
 ' that Age, through the Slothfulness of Men, that

• An. 908. ' there was a general Decay of Virtue both in the  
 ' Head and Members. Again, ' These Times,

• ' through the Ambition and cruel Tyranny of the  
 ' Popes, were extremely unhappy--For the Popes

• ' setting aside the Fear of God and his Worship,  
 ' fell into such Enmities among themselves as cruel

• ' Tyrants exercise towards one another. *Sabellicus*  
 • Ennead. ' \* says, It is wonderful to observe what a strange

9. l. 1. ' Forgetfulness of all Arts did about this Time seize  
 An. 900. ' upon Men; insomuch that neither the Popes, nor

• ' other Princes, seemed to have any Sense or Ap-  
 ' prehension of any Thing that might be useful to

• ' human Life. There were no wholesome Laws,  
 ' no Reparations of Churches, no Pursuit of liberal

• ' Arts, but a kind of Stupidity and Madness, and  
 ' Forgetfulness of Manners had possessed the Minds

• ' of Men. And a little after; I cannot (says he)  
 ' but much wonder from whence these tragical Ex-

• ' amples of Popes should spring; and how their  
 ' Minds should come to be so devoid of all Piety, as

• ' neither to regard the Person which they sustained,  
 • DeRegn. ' nor the Place they were in.' *Sigonius* \* speaking of

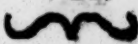
Ital. L. 6. these Times, about the beginning of the tenth Cen-  
 tury, calls them ' the foulest and blackest, both in

• ' respect of the Wickedness of Princes, and the  
 ' Madness of the People, that are to be found in all An-

• ' tiquity.' *Genebrard* \* speaking of the same Time:  
 • Chron. ' This (says he) is called the unhappy Age; being

L. 4. ' destitute of Men eminent for Wit and Learning,  
 ' as also of famous Princes and Popes. In this

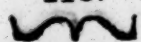
• ' Time there was scarce any Thing done worthy to  
 ' be

‘ be remembred by Posterity.’ And he adds after-SECT. VII.  
wards, ‘ But chiefly unhappy in this one Thing,  VII.  
‘ that for almost an hundred and fifty Years toge-  
‘ ther, about fifty Popes did utterly degenerate  
‘ from the Virtue of their Ancestors.’ He should  
have added farther, but even to a Miracle *happy* in  
another respect, that during this long and total De-  
generacy from the Piety and Virtue of their Ancestors,  
they did not in the least swerve from them in  
matter of Faith and Doctrine: A thing incredible,  
were there not *Demonstration* for it. *Werner* gives<sup>a</sup> Fascic.  
this Character of that Time; ‘ About the Year of<sup>b</sup> Tempor.  
‘ our Lord One Thousand there began an effeminate  
‘ Time, in which the Christian Faith began to dege-  
‘ nerate exceedingly, and to decline from its anci-  
‘ ent Vigor; insomuch that in many Countries of  
‘ *Christendom*, neither Sacraments nor Ecclesiastical  
‘ Rites were observed---And People were given to  
‘ Soothsaying and Witchcraft, and the Priest was  
‘ like the People.’ It seems by this Testimony,  
that Tradition did falter a little in that Age, else  
the *Christian Faith* could not possibly have degene-  
rated and declined so very much: And (which threat-  
ens Mr. S’s *Demonstration* most of all) that the  
*Practical Tradition of Sacraments*, and other *Ecclesi-*  
*astical Observances*, did fail in *many Christian Coun-*  
*tries*. *Gerbert*<sup>b</sup> who lived in that Time, gives this<sup>b</sup> Ep. 42.  
short Character of the *Roman Church*, in an Epistle  
of his to *Stephen*, Deacon of that Church, *The World*  
*stands amazed at the manners of Rome*. But most full  
is the Complaint of a great ‘ *Prelate* of the Church<sup>c</sup> Bell.  
concerning those Times; ‘ In the *West* (says he) and<sup>c</sup> Sacr. 1. 1;  
‘ almost all the World over (especially among those<sup>c</sup> 8.  
‘ who were called the Faithful) Faith failed, and  
‘ there was no Fear of God among them:’ (It seems  
the Argument of Fear had lost its Force) ‘ Justice  
‘ was perished from among Men, and Violence pre-  
‘ vailing against Equity governed the Nations.  
‘ Fraud, Deceit, and the Arts of Cozenage were  
VOL. III. R ‘ grown



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grown universal. All kind of Virtue gave way as an useleſs Thing, and Wickedneſs ſupply'd its place. The World ſeemed to be declining apace towards its Evening, and the ſecond coming of the Son of Man to draw near: For love was grown cold, and Faith was not found upon Earth. All things were in Confuſion, and the World look'd as if it would return to its old Chaos---All ſorts of Fornication were committed with the ſame Freedom as if they had been lawful Actions; for Men neither bluſhed at them, nor were puniſh'd for them---Nor did the Clergy live better than the People---For the Biſhops were grown negligent of the Duty of their Place, &c. In a word, Men ran themſelves headlong into all Vice, and all Fleſh had corrupted its way.' And farther, to ſhew the great neglect of Priests and Biſhops in the Work of Teaching and Inſtructing (which is ſo neceſſary to the preſerving of Tradition inviolable) I will add the

\* Elfric. Ser. ad Sacerdot. Testimony of one <sup>a</sup> who lived in thoſe Times; who tells us, *That in thoſe Days the Priests and Biſhops, who ought to have been the Pillars of the Church, were ſo negligent that they did not mind the Divine Scripture; nor take any Care to teach and inſtruct Scholars that might ſucceed them, as we read Holy Men had uſed to do, who left many Scholars perfectly inſtructed to be their Succeſſors.* If they had only neglected the Scriptures, all might have been well enough; but it ſeems they took no Care to inſtruct People in the way of *Oral Tradition*, nor to furniſh the Church with a new Generation of able Teachers, who might deliver down from Hand to Hand the *Senſe and Faith of Forefathers.* This laſt Teſtimony the late learned Lord Primate of Ireland, Biſhop Uſher (in his Book *de Chriſtian. Eccleſ. Succeſſ.* &c. <sup>b</sup> where ſeveral of the Teſtimonies I have produced, with many more to the ſame Purpoſe, may be ſeen) cites out of a MS. in Bennet College Library in Cambridge; concerning the Authority of which MS. there need be

<sup>b</sup> C. 2, & 3.

no

no dispute between Mr. S. and me; because the SECT. whole Force and Effect of this Testimony is sufficiently VII. contained in those Citations which I have brought out of publick and unquestionable Books.

§. 4. All these Testimonies which I have produced are, in general and for the Substance of them, confirmed by *Two* of the greatest Props of the *Romish* Church, *Bellarmino* and *Baronius*. *Bellarmino* lays of this Tenth Age, *That there was never any* <sup>a De Rom.</sup> *either more unlearned or more unhappy.* *Baronius* <sup>c Pontif. L.</sup> speaks more particularly, 'What was then the Face <sup>4. c. 12.</sup> of the *Roman* Church? How deformed? When <sup>e An.</sup> 'Whores, no less powerful than vile, bore the <sup>Tom. 10.</sup> chief sway at *Rome*; and at their Pleasure changed Sees, appointed Bishops, and (which it is horrible to mention) did thrust into *St. Peter's* See their own Gallants, false Popes, who would not have been mentioned in the Catalogue of the *Roman* Popes, but only from the more distinct recording of so long a Succession of times. And a little after, 'Christ was then (it seems) in a very deep Sleep-- 'And which was worse; when the Lord was thus asleep, there were no Disciples to awaken him, being themselves all fast asleep. What kind of Cardinals, Presbyters, and Deacons, can we think were chosen by these Monsters, when nothing is so natural as for every one to propogate his own Likeness?' It is very much that these lewd Women, and their favourite Popes, Cardinals, and Bishops, who then swayed the Church, should, when they were so careless of their own Souls, be so tender of the Salvation of Posterity; and when they administered all other Affairs of the Church so extravagantly, should be so careful of the *main Chance*, as to transmit the Christian Doctrine entire and uncorrupted to succeeding Ages. Yet Mr. S. hath demonstrated this *a posteriori*, which seems so very strange to a Man that considers Things *a priori*.

PART. §. 5. But it may be this dismal State of the Ro-

III. *man Church* lasted but a little while; and she did  
 in the same Age, before Tradition could be interrupted, recover herself out of this degenerate Condition. I will therefore enquire a little into the State of succeeding Times. And I find in the

<sup>c</sup> In Con-  
 vers. Sancti Pauli,  
 Serm. 1.

Thirteenth Century St. Bernard<sup>c</sup> complaining, That the Degeneracy of the Priests was in his Days greater than ever; *We cannot* (says he) *now say, As is the People so is the Priest; for the People are not so bad as their Priests.* In the Fifteenth Century, Nic. de Clemangiis, who lived in that Time, wrote a Book upon this Argument, *Of the corrupt State of the Church*; by which we may make some Judgment whether in that Age it was (as Mr. S. says) impossible but that the Christian Doctrine should be entirely preserved, and faithfully

<sup>d</sup> C. 3.

and diligently taught. He says<sup>d</sup> there was an universal Degeneracy in the Church *from the very Head of it to its lowest Members.* In the same Chapter he complains, *Who is there that preaches the Gospel to the People? Who shews them the way to Salvation either by Word or Action?* It seems there was a great Failure both of *Oral and Practical Tradition.*

<sup>e</sup> C. 5.

Again, <sup>e</sup> speaking of the Pope's taking to himself the Collation of all vacant Bishopricks and Dignities; he says, one might think the Pope did this, *that the Church might be provided of worthier governors, both in respect of their learning and their lives, did not the Thing it self declare the contrary; and that ignorant and useless Persons (provided they had Money) were by Simony advanced to the highest degrees in the Church.* And <sup>a</sup> speaking what a vast

<sup>a</sup> C. 6.

Number of Candidates there was usually at Rome from all Parts waiting for Benefices and Dignities, he tells us, That many of these *did not come from their Studies, or from Schools of Learning, to govern Parishes; but from the Plow, and from the meanest Professions: And that they understood Latin and Arabick*

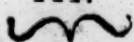


bick much at the same rate; and many of them could not read at all. But it may be (says he) their Manners were such as might be some excuse for their Ignorance. No; though their Learning was but little, their Virtue was less; for being brought up in Idleness, they followed nothing but Debauchery and Sports, &c. Hence it comes to pass, that in all places there are so many wicked, and wretched, and ignorant Priests.-- Hence it is that Priests are so contemned by the common people.---- Formerly the Priesthood was highly honoured by the people, and nothing was more venerable than that Order of Men; but now nothing is more vile and despicable.--<sup>c</sup> I make no doubt, but there are now<sup>c</sup> C. 9. more Thieves and Robbers, than true Pastors in the Church.----<sup>a</sup> Why should any Man now flatter himself with hopes of preferment, because of his Virtue or Learning? Men do not now (as formerly) rise in the Church by such Arts----<sup>c</sup> Which of those that are<sup>c</sup> C. 11. now-a-days advanced to the pontifical Dignity, hath so much as perfunctorily read, or heard, or learnt the Scriptures; yea, or ever touched any more than the Cover of the Bible? Again<sup>a</sup>, speaking of the prodigious Covetousness of the Governors of the Church, and the gross neglect of their Flocks, They would (says he) much more contentedly bear the loss of tenthousand Souls, than of ten or twelve Shillings. But why do I say more contentedly? When without the least trouble or disturbance to themselves, they can bear the loss of souls: A thing so far from their care, that it never enter'd into their thoughts.

Had the Hereticks of those Days but had Wit enough, and a little Money, they might (it seems) for a small Sum have hired the Governors of the Church to have renounced Tradition, or to have ceased to propagate it; though they had known that in so doing they should have damned all their Posterity. He goes on, and tells us, 'That if there were perhaps any one who did not take these Courses, the rest would all snarl at him, call him

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C. 16.

C. 20, 21.  
23.

C. 25.

' Fool, and say he was unfit to be a Priest.----So  
 ' that the Study of the Scriptures (together with  
 ' the Professors of it) was turned into laughter  
 ' and scorn by all; but (which is prodigious) es-  
 ' pecially by the Popes, who prefer their own  
 ' Tradition many Degrees before the Commands  
 ' of God.' I desire Mr. S. to take notice in what  
 kind of times *Tradition* was set up against Scrip-  
 ture. Again speaking of the choice of Persons  
 to be Priests, he tells us, ' That there was no  
 ' Enquiry made into their Lives, no Question a-  
 ' bout their Manners: As for their Learning, (says  
 ' he) what need I speak of that? When we see the  
 ' Priests, almost universally, have much ado to  
 ' read, though but in an hesitating and spelling Fa-  
 ' shion, drawing out one Syllable after another,  
 ' without understanding either the Sense of what  
 ' they read, or the Words.' I am now reconciled to  
*oral Tradition*, and convinced that there was great need  
 of it in those Ages in which scarce any of the Priests  
 could either write or read. I omit the Particulars of  
 what he says ' concerning the common *Drunkennes*  
*and Incontinency of Priests, who,* (because they made  
 Conscience of Marriage) *kept Whores in their*  
*Houses;* concerning the dissolute Lives of *Monks;*  
 and concerning *Nunneries*, which instead of being  
*the Sanctuaries of God, were the abominable Stews*  
*of Venus, and the Receptacles of lascivious young Men;*  
 insomuch (says he) *that at this Day it is the same*  
*thing to put a Virgin into a Nunnery, and to make*  
*her a common Strumpet.* And to shew that he does  
 not speak these things of a few, but with Rela-  
 tion to the general Corruption of that Age,  
 he adds, ' That Wickedness did so abound in  
 ' all Orders of Men, that scarce one among a  
 ' thousand was to be found who did truly live  
 ' up to his Profession: And if there was any one  
 ' that did not follow these lewd courses, he be-  
 ' came ridiculous to others, and was branded ei-  
 ' ther

‘ther as an insolent singular Madman or an Hypo-SECT.  
 ‘cite.’ I will conclude this long Testimony with VII.  
 the Character which he gives<sup>a</sup> of one of the Popes  
 of his Time, *Clement* by Name, viz. ‘That he did’ C. 27.  
 ‘chiefly apply himself to gratify and oblige all the  
 ‘Parasites and Buffoons that had any interest in  
 ‘the several Courts of Princes: And to this End  
 ‘did confer upon these, and upon handsome  
 ‘young Boys (which he much delighted in) almost  
 ‘all the vacant Bishopricks, and most of the other  
 ‘Church Dignities. It is well that *Oral Tradition*  
 hath the Security of *Infallibility*, otherwise it  
 had in all *Probability* been lost among this lewd sort  
 of People, which yet they gravely call the *Holy Ro-*  
*man Catholick Church*.

§. 6. To this effect I might have produced Tes-  
 timonies concerning every age from the *Ninth* to the  
*Sixteenth*; but Mr. *Cressy* hath saved me that labour,  
 who acknowledges, ‘that these worst time of the’ Exomo-  
 ‘Church, when Ignorance, Worldliness, Pride, log. C. 68.  
 ‘Tyranny, &c. reigned with so much Scope:  
 ‘When the Popes (so wicked, so abominable in their  
 ‘lives) enjoyed so unlimited a Power even over se-  
 ‘cular Princes themselves, and much more over the  
 ‘Clergy: I say, he acknowledges that these *worst*  
 ‘Times continued during the Space of *about six Ages*  
 ‘before Luther:’ A competent time (one would  
 think) for Tradition to have miscarried in, were it  
 not (as M. S. says) *indefectible*. Mr. *Cressy* indeed  
 tells us<sup>d</sup>, That this was to him an *irrefragable Testi-* Ibid.  
*mony of a strange watchfulness of Divine Providence*  
*over the Church, to preserve it from the Gates of Hell*  
*(that is, establish’d and dangerous Errors) during these*  
*worst Times*. And very likely it is that this might  
 appear so to such a *Catholick* whose Judgment, he tells  
 us, it is to renounce his own Judgment: But it will  
 never appear *irrefragable* to any Man that hath his  
 Judgment about him, unless Mr. *Cressy* can prove,  
 that by that Phrase, viz. *the Gates of Hell*, the Scrip-



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ture does nor mean groſs Wickedneſs of Life, as well as *dangerous errors in Opinion*; and likewise, that a general Vitiousneſs and Debauchery of Manners is not as pernicious to Chriſtianity, and as deſtructive to the end of it, as *eſtabliſhed Errors in Doctrine*. And if ſo, that the Providence of God is not equally concerned to preſerve the Church from things equally pernicious. When he hath proved theſe three Things then this Declamatory Diſcourſe of his may ſignify ſomething but not before.

§. 7. Now if this be a true representation of the State of the *Roman Church* in thoſe Ages, was not this a very fit time for the Devil to play his Pranks in? Will any Man that reads theſe Testimonies, think it impoſſible that the Doctrine of Chriſt ſhould have been depraved in this Age; or that the moſt ſenſleſs and abſurd Tenets might then be brought in under the Notion of Chriſtian Doctrines? When ſcarce any one knew what the Doctrine of Chriſt was; When a general Ignorance of Letters, and almoſt an univerſal ſtupidity and madneſs had ſeized upon the Minds of men: When there was a horrid Depravation of manners, and a general failure of Virtue and Piety both in the Head and Members of the Church; when the Lives of the Popes were Tragically Wicked, and no footſteps of Piety appeared in them: When for about 150 Years together, in a continued Succeſſion of 50 Popes, there was ſcarce one pious and virtuous man (or woman) ſat in that Chair: When the *Whores*, governed *Rome*, and put out and put in *Biſhops* at their Pleaſure; and made their own *Gallants* Popes, who would be ſure to make a College of Cardinals of ſuch Monſters as themſelves: when *pretty Boys*, and *Paraſites*, and *Buffoons*, led the Head of the Church by the Noſe, and were gratified with the beſt Biſhopricks and Dignities in the Church: when there was a general decay of Knowledge, and Deſection of the Chriſtian Faith, when in many Countries neither Sacraments, nor other Eccleſiaſtical

ecclesiastical Rites were observed: When Violence and SECT. VII.  
 Fraud, and all the Arts of Deceit and Cozenage, and blacker Arts than these, were the common Study and Practice: When intemperance, and all kind of Lewdness and Debauchery, reign in all Sorts and Orders of Men: When the Generality of Bishops and Priests (who according to Mr. *Rushworth*<sup>a</sup> can<sup>a</sup> Dial. 3. only teach the Traditionary Doctrine) were ignorant Sect. 3.  
 in the Scriptures and in every thing else (very few of them being able so much as to read tolerably) and did neglect to teach the People, and to breed up any in Knowledge to succeed them in their Office; and in the Lewdness of their Lives did surpass the vilest of the People. Was not such an Age a fit Season to plant the Doctrine of *Transubstantiation* in? Or if any thing more monstrous than that can be imagined, it might then have taken Place; for what Weeds would not have grown in so rank a Soil? Doth Mr. S. think it impossible, that those that were born in the Church then should be ignorant of the Doctrine of Christ, when scarce any one would take the pains to teach it them; or that it could then have been altered, when so few understood and fewer practised it? When prodigious Impiety and Wickedness did overspread the Church from the Pope down to the meanest of the Laity, can any one believe that Men generally made Conscience to instruct their Children in the true Faith of Christ? Was it impossible there should be any neglect of this Duty, when all others failed? That there should be any Mistake about the Doctrine of Christ, when there was so much Ignorance? Unless he be of Mr. *Rushworth*'s<sup>b</sup> Mind, who reckons *Ignorance* among Dial. 3.  
 the Parents of Religion. Where were then the Arguments of Hope and Fear? Were they strongly applied, or were they not? Were they Causes of actual Will in Christians to believe well when they lived so ill? Or is Christianity only fitted to form mens Sect. 7.  
 Minds

PART. Minds to a right Belief, but of no Efficacy to govern  
 III. their Lives? Hath Christ taken Care to keep his  
 Church from Error, ~~but~~ from Vice? as the great  
 \*Reply to Cardinal Perron\* (stooping below his own Wit and  
 K. James. Reason to serve a bad Cause) tells us, *That the Church*  
 L. 4. C. 6. *sings and will sing to the End of the World, I am black,*  
*but I am fair; that is to say, I am black in Manners,*  
*but fair in Doctrine:* As if the meaning of the Pro-  
 phesies and Promises of Scripture made to the  
 Church were this, that by the extraordinary Care  
 of God's Providence, and peculiar Assistance of his  
 Holy Spirit, he should be wicked, but orthodox to  
 the End of the World. Where were then the *vigo-*  
*rous Causes imprinting* Christ's Doctrine, and con-  
 tinuing it more particularly at *Rome* than any where  
 else; and of securing that *See* and its *supreme Pastor*  
 in the Faith and Practice of the Christian Doctrine,  
 above any other See or Pasture whatsoever? Who is  
 so little versed in History, as not to understand the  
 dismal State of Religion in the *Romish* Church in  
 those Times? Who does not know what Advantages  
 the Bishops of *Rome* and their servile Clergy, made  
 of the Ignorance and Superstition of those and the  
 succeeding Ages; and by what Arts and Steps they  
 raised themselves to that power which they held in  
 the Church for a long while after? When they  
 could tread upon the Necks of princes, and make a  
 great King walk barefoot, and yield himself to be  
 scourged by a Company of petulant Monks: When  
 they could send any Man upon an Errand to visit the  
 Holy Sepulchre, or the Shrine of such a Saint; and  
 command five or six Kings with great Armies upon a  
 needless Expedition into the Holy Land, that so  
 during their Absence they might play their own  
 Game the better: When they could mint Miracles,  
 and impose upon the Belief of the People (without  
 the Authority of any ancient Books) absurd and  
 counterfeit Tales of ancient Saints and Martyrs,  
 as delivered down to them by *Tradition*; and could  
 bring



bring that foppish Book the *Legend* almost into equal Sect. Authority and Veneration with the *Bible*; and per- VII. suade the easy People that St. *Denys* carried his <sup>own</sup> Head in his Hand, after it was cut off, two Miles, and kiss'd it when he laid it down. Any one that shall but reflect upon the monstrous Practices of the *Roman* Bishops and Clergy in these Ages, the strange Feats they played, and what Absurdities they imposed upon the superstitious Credulity of Princes and People, may readily imagine not only the Possibility, but the Easiness of innovating new Doctrines as they pleased, under the specious Pretences of Antiquity, and constant and uninterrupted Tradition.

§. 8. And this kind of Discourse concerning the possibility of Errors coming into the Church, is not, as Mr. *White* ridiculously compares it, <sup>d</sup> as if an Ora-<sup>d</sup> Apology tor should go about to persuade People, that *George* for Tradition, P. 49. *by the help of a long Saff and a nimble Cast of his Body,* and such like Advantages, *might leap over Paul's Steeple; never considering all the while the Disproportion of all these Advantages to the Height of the Steeple: So (saith he) he that discourseth at large how Errors use to slide into Mans Life, without comparing the Power of the Cause of Error to the Strength of resisting, which consists in this Principle, Nothing is to be admitted but what descends by Tradition, &c. says no more towards proving an Error's over-running the Church, than the Orator for George's leaping over the Steeple. How vain is this? When it appears from this instance that I have given of the State of the Roman Church in the Ninth and Tenth Centuries, and afterwards, that the Causes of Error were infinitely stronger than the Power of Resistance. The great Causes of Error are Ignorance and Vice; where Ignorance reigns, there's no Power; where Vice, no Will to resist it. And how great the Ignorance and Viciousness of all Orders of Men in the Roman Church was, is too apparent from the Testimonies I have brought. Where was the Strength*

PART. Strength of resisting Error, when for 150 Years

III. together the Popes were the vilest of Men, Bishops and Priests overwhelmed with Ignorance, abandoned to all manner of Vice, and most supinely negligent in instructing the People? In such a degenerate State of a Church what Strength is there in this Principle, *Nothing is to be admitted but what descends by Tradition?* When those, who ought to teach men what that Doctrine is which was derived to them by Tradition, are generally careless of their Duty, and ignorant themselves what that Doctrine is; when they addict themselves wholly to the satisfying their Ambition, and other Lusts, and carrying on Designs of Gain, and getting Dominion over the People; What can hinder Men so disposed from corrupting the Doctrine of Christ, and suiting it to their own Lusts and Interests? And what shall hinder the People from embracing those Corruptions? when by the Negligence of their Pastors to instruct them, and not only so, but also by their being deprived of the Scriptures in a known Tongue, they are become utterly incapable of knowing what the true Doctrine of Christ is. So that in an Age of such profound Ignorance and Vice, and general Neglect of Instruction, 'tis so far from being impossible for Errors to over-run a Church, that the contrary is morally impossible; and *George's long Staff*, and advantageous *Cast of his Body*, are more powerful Causes to enable him to leap over *Paul's Steeple*, than this principle, *That nothing is to be admitted but what descends by Tradition*, is to keep Errors out of a Church in an ignorant and vicious Age; when few or none are either able or willing to instruct Men in the Truth. For suppose this always to have been the Principle of Christians, viz. *That nothing is to be admitted as the Doctrine of Christ, but what is descended to them by tradition*; How shall this principle secure the Church from Heresy, any more than this, viz. *That nothing but truth is to be assented to*, doth secure Men

from

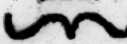
from Error? Or more than this, viz. *That no Man* SECT. VIII. *is to do any thing but what is wise and virtuous,* does VIII. secure the Generality of Mankind from Folly and Vice?

SECT. VIII. *The second Answer to his second Demonstration.*

§. I. **S**ECONDLY, The Principles upon which this Demonstration relies are not sufficiently proved by him.

His *first* Principle is this, 'That Age which holds her Faith delivered thus from the Apostles, neither can itself have changed any thing in it, nor know or doubt that any Age since the Apostles had changed or innovated any thing therein. This Proposition (*he tells us*) needs no proof to evidence it, but only an Explication: For since no Man can hold contrary to his Knowledge, or doubt of what he holds, nor change or innovate in the Case proposed without knowing he did so; 'tis a manifest Impossibility a whole Age should fall into an Absurdity so inconsistent with the Nature of one single Man.' But (by his Favour) that which he says is no *Proof*, but only an *Explication*, is a *Proof* if it be any thing; and the Force of it is this: That which is *inconsistent with the Nature of one single Man, is manifestly impossible to a whole Age*; but it is inconsistent with the Nature of any single Man to hold contrary to his Knowledge, &c. therefore impossible to a whole Age; and consequently, *that Age which holds her Faith delivered thus from the Apostles, neither can itself have changed any thing, nor, &c.* So that in order to the making good of this *first* Principle, Mr. S. hath left nothing unproved but only this Proposition, *namely*, That it is impossible that any one single Man that holds his Faith to have been delivered uninterruptedly from the Apostles, should ever himself have changed any thing in it, or know or doubt that any Age since the Apostles hath changed



PART III.  ged or innovated any thing therein : And to make out the Truth of this Proposition, there only remains this to be proved, *viz.* That it is impossible for any single Man to be mistaken : For if that be possible, then contrary to Mr. S. a Man may hold that to have been delivered as a Doctrine of Faith from the Apostles which was not so delivered.

§. 2. His *second Principle* is this, ' that no Age ' could innovate any thing, and withal deliver that ' very thing to Posterity as received from Christ by ' continual Succession. *He proves it thus* ; since ' Man is a rational Creature, he must have some ' Reason or Motive good or bad, which he propo- ' seth to himself as an End to be atchieved by his ' Action : And whatever his remote End is, his im- ' mediate End, in telling posterity a late invented ' thing was held immediately before, is to make ' them believe it. Wherefore since a seen Impossi- ' bility cannot be a Motive to one not frantick ; and ' since 'tis evidently impossible they should make ' posterity believe a thing so universally known to ' be false, as this must needs be, &c. it is as impos- ' sible this principle should falter, as that the fore- ' going Age should conspire to act without a Mo- ' tive, or that the succeeding Age should believe ' what they know to be otherwise, that is, should ' hold both Sides of a Contradiction in a clear Mat- ' ter of Fact.' The Force of which is this, That it is impossible that any Man not frantick should attempt to innovate in Matter of Christian Doctrine, because the immediate End of such an Attempt must be to have this new Doctrine believed ; but it is impossible he should attain this End, and impossible he should not see that it is impossible to attain it : Now a seen Impossibility is an End that cannot move any one that is not frantick ; therefore no man that is not frantick can attempt to innovate in Matter of Christian Doctrine. Thus he hath demonstrated it impossible that there should be any Heriticks, if a Here-  
tick

tick be one that attempts to innovate in Matter of **SECT.**  
 Christian Doctrine: For if there be any such At- **IX.**  
 tempters they must be frantick, and if they be fran-  
 tick they can be no Hereticks; for Heresy implies a  
 Crime, but God will not impute the Actions of Mad-  
 men to them as Faults. Again, suppose he that at-  
 tempts to innovate be mistaken (and I hope Mr. S.  
 will grant that a Heretick is fallible) and think that  
 which he delivers as Christ's Doctrine to be really so,  
 though indeed it be not; why should such a Person  
 think it impossible to make men believe that to be  
 received from Christ which he really thinks was re-  
 ceived, and thinks he can make it appear that it was  
 so? And if this be granted, then it is not impossible  
 that *Man, though he be a rational Creature*, may at-  
 tempt to innovate. And if so, then his *second Prin-*  
*ciple* is not proved. If Mr. S. had any regard to *the*  
*noble Science of Controversy* (whereof he pretends to  
 be so great a Master) he would not bring such tri-  
 fling Sophisms instead of demonstrative Proofs; And  
 nothing less than a demonstrative Proof will serve to  
 establish any Principle upon which a Demonstration  
 is to be built.

**SECT. IX.** *The Third Answer to Mr. S's Second  
 Demonstration.*

§. I. **D**OCTRINES and Practices which must  
 be acknowledged to have been innova-  
 ted, have made the same Pretence to uninterrupted  
 Tradition. And of this I shall give several Instan-  
 ces; one among the *Jews*, the rest among *Christi-*  
*ans*.

I. I shall instance among the *Traditionary Jews*,  
 whose Persuasion in our Saviour's Time was, and  
 still is, that their Oral Doctrine, which they call  
 their *Cabala*, hath descended to them from *Moses*  
 uninterruptedly. Now here is the *Existence of such*  
*a Persuasion*, as Mr. S. affirms to be *impossible without*  
*Tradition's ever-indeficiency to beget it.* And this Per-  
 suasion

PART. suasion of theirs is most exactly parallel with the Pre-

III. tensions of the *Romish* Church according to Mr. S.

For here's a multitude of Traditionary *Jews*, manifoldly greater in proportion to the Dissenters in that Church, than the *Romish* Church is in Comparison to those Christians that dissent from her. *Josephus* tells us, \* That *the richer Sort were of the persuasion of the Sadducees, but the Multitude were on the Pharisees Side*. So that the *Pharisees* had this Mark of the true Church (as *Bellarmino* calls it) common to them with the Church of *Rome*, that they were the greatest Number, and so they continue to this very day; insomuch that although they do not call themselves the *Catholicks*, yet I am sure they call all *Jews* that do dissent from them *Schismaticks*. Now that the *Sadducees* were for the written Law against Oral Tradition, is, I confess, no Credit to us; but that our *Saviour* reprov'd the Traditionary Doctrine and Practices of the *Pharisees*, because by them they made void the written Law, is much more to the discredit of the Assertors of Oral Tradition. Both *Romanists* and *Pharisees* they own alike a *written Doctrine*, but then they both pretend the true Sense and Explication thereof to have descended to them by *Oral Tradition*. For just as the Traditionary *Christians* do now, so *Josephus* tells \* us, the Traditionary *Jews* of Old, the *Pharisees* did pretend by their Oral Tradition to interpret the Law more accurately and exactly than any other Sect. In like manner he \* tells us, That all things, that belonged to Prayer and Divine Worship, were regulated and administered according to their Interpretations of the Law. And they both agree in this, to make void the Word of God by their Tradition; which the *Pharisees* did no otherwise than Mr. S. does, by equalling Oral Tradition to Scripture; nay preferring it above Scripture, in making it the sole Rule of Faith, and interpreting the Scripture according to it. Hence are those common sayings in the *Talmud*, and other Jewish Books.

\* Antiq.  
Jud. l. 13.  
c. 18.

\* Ibid. l.  
17. c. 3. &  
de Bell.  
Jud. l. 1.  
c. 4. & l.  
2. c. 12.

\* Antiq. l.  
18. c. 2.



Books : *Do not think that the written Law is the Foun-* SECT.  
*dition, but that the Law Orally delivered is the right* IX.  
*Foundation ; which is to say with Mr. S. that not the*  
*Scripture, but Oral Tradition is the true Rule of Faith.*  
 Again, *There is more in the Words of the Scribes (viz.*  
*the Testifiers of Tradition) than in the Words of the*  
*written Law.* Again, *The Oral Law excells the Writ-*  
*ten, as much as the Soul doth the Body ;* which accords  
 very well with what Mr. S. frequently tells us, that  
 the Scripture without Tradition is but a dead Let-  
 ter, destitute of Life and Sense. Hence also it is  
 that they required the People (as the Traditionary  
 Church does now) to yield up themselves to the Dic-  
 tates of Tradition even in the most absurd Things,  
 as appears by that common Saying among them, *If*  
*the Scribes say that the right hand is the left, and the*  
*left the right* (that Bread is Flesh, and Wine is Blood)  
*hearken to them,* that is, make no Scruple of what-  
 soever they deliver as Tradition, though never so  
 contrary to Reason or Sense. And lastly, The Do-  
 ctrines of the *Pharisees* were many of them *practi-*  
*cal ;* such were all those which concerned external  
 Rites and Observances, as *washing of Hands and Cups,*  
 &c. So that these *pharisaical* Traditions had also that  
*unspeakable* advantage which Mr. S. says renders their  
 Traditions *unmistakeable.* That they were daily pra-  
 ctised, and came down *clad in such plain matters of*  
*Fact, that the most stupid Man living could not possibly*  
*be ignorant of them.* Therefore, according to Mr.  
 S's Principles, it was impossible that any Age of the  
*Jews* should be persuaded that these things were com-  
 manded by *Moses* and ever since observed, if they  
 had not been so : And yet our *Saviour* denies these  
 Customs to have been of any such Authority as they  
 pretended.

§. 2. But I needed not to have taken all this pains  
 to shew the agreement which is between the Tradi-  
 tionary *Jews* and *Papists*, their own Writers so libe-  
 rally

PART rally acknowledging it. Mr. *White* indeed says,

III. That *the Faith of the Jews was not delivered to them Orally, but by Writing*; than which nothing

*De Did.*

*& Theol.*

*Tract. 1.*

*Sect. 6.*

*Rep. to*

*K. James,*

*Observe. 3.*

*c. 4.*

can be more inconsistent with his *Hypothesis*. For if the *Jewish Faith* was conveyed to them not Orally but by *Writing*; then either the *Jewish Church* had no sufficient *Rule of Faith*, or else a *Writing* may be such a Rule. But other of their *Champions* make great use of the Parallel, between the *Traditionary Jews* and the *Romish Church*, to confirm from

thence their own *Traditionary Doctrines*. Cardinal *Perron* hath a full Passage to this purpose; ‘As

‘ this (says he) is to preserve sound and entire Res-

‘ pect to the Majesty of the ancient *Mosaick Scrip-*

‘ ture, to believe and observe not only all the things

‘ which are therein actually contained but also those

‘ things which are therein contained mediately and

‘ relatively, as the *Doctrines of Paradise, &c.*

‘ which were not contained therein but mediately,

‘ and by the Authority which it gave to the Deposi-

‘ tion of the *Patriarchal and Mosaick Tradition*,

‘ preserved by heart, and in the *Oral Doctrine* of

‘ the *Synagogue*; So this is to preserve a sound and

‘ entire Respect to the Majesty of the *Apostolical*

‘ *Scripture*, to believe and observe all the things

‘ which it contains, not only immediately and by

‘ it self, but mediately and by reference to the *Apo-*

‘ stolical Traditions, to which in gross and general-

‘ ly it gives the Authority of *Apostolical Doctrines*,

‘ and to the Church the Authority of *Guardian and*

‘ *Depositary* to preserve and attest them.’ *Voyssin* in

his *Observations upon Raymundus Martin*, ‘tells us,

‘ That as in the *Old Law* the great *Consistory* at

‘ *Jerusalem* was the Foundation of the true *Traditi-*

‘ on, so (says he) the *See of Rome* is the Foundation

‘ of our Tradition. And as the continual Succession

‘ of the *High Priests and Fathers* among the *Jews*

‘ was the great Confirmation of the Truth of their

‘ Traditions, so (says he) with us the Truth of our

‘ *Catholick*

*c Pugio*

*Fid. P.*

145.

‘ Catholick Doctrine is confirmed by a continual SECT.  
‘ Succession of Popes. IX.

§. 3. From all this it appears, that the *Pharisees* among the *Jews* made the same pretence to *Oral Tradition* which the *Papists* do at this Day according to Mr. S. And if so, then Mr. S’s Demonstration *a posteriori* is every whit as strong for the *Jews* against our *Saviour*, as it is for the *Papists* against the *Protestants*. For we find that in our *Saviour*’s time, it was then *the present persuasion of the Traditionary Jews, that their Faith, and their Rites, and the true Sense and Interpretation of their written Law, was descended from Moses and the Prophets to them uninterruptedly; which we find was most firmly rooted in their Hearts.* But the *Jews* had constant Tradition among them, that the *Messiah* was to be a great temporal Prince: And though the Letter of the Prophecies concerning him, might well enough have been accommodated to the low and suffering Condition of our *Saviour*; yet they did *infallibly* know that their *Messiah* was to be another kind of Person, from *Sense written in their Hearts*, from the Interpretation of those Prophecies Orally brought down to them, from the *Patriarchal and Mosaick Tradition preserved by Heart, and in the Oral Doctrine of the Synagogue, and from the living Voice of their Church essential*, that is, the universal Consent of the then *Traditionary Jews*. If it be said, That the *Jewish Tradition* did indeed bring down several Doctrines not contained in Scripture, of *Paradise*, of *Hell*, of the *last Judgment*, of the *Resurrection*, &c. (as Cardinal *Perron* affirms) but it did not bring down this *Point of the Messiah’s being a Temporal Prince*: Then as Mr. S. asks us, so the *Jews* does him; *By what virtue Tradition brought down these other Points? and whether the same Virtue were not powerful to bring down this, as well as those? Then he will ask him farther, Is there not a necessary Connexion and Relation between a constant Cause, and its formal Effect? So that if its formal*

p. 76.



PART III. *mal Effect be Points received as delivered ever; the proper Cause must be an ever-delivery; whence he will argue from such an Effect to its Cause for any particular Point, and consequently for this Point that is in Controversy between Jews and Christians, concerning the Messiah's being a Temporal Prince, in case it be a Point held ever delivered; but most certain it is, it was so held by the Jews in our Saviour's time, and hath been held so ever since to this Day.*

I shall not trouble the *Reader* with transcribing the rest of this *Demonstration*, only desire him as he reads it over, to imagine instead of Mr. S. a *Pharisee* demonstrating against one of *Christ's* Disciples the *Infallibility* of the *Oral Tradition* of the *Jews*: And I doubt not but he will find this *Demonstration*, and every part of it (changing only the Names) as forcibly concluding *Christ* not to be the *Messiah*, as it doth infer any point of *Popery* against the *Protestants*.

§. 4. Before I leave this *Instance* of the *Jewish Tradition*, I shall briefly consider what Mr. White hath offered by way of Answer to it; as, *First*, That the *matter* of these Traditions is nothing else but *Explications of Scripture framed and invented by their own Rabbins*. So we say, that the *Popish Traditions* are *Innovations*. But then Mr. White and Mr. S. tells us, That they can demonstrate them to be descended from *Christ* and his *Apostles*, because it is the present persuasion of a multitude of Christians that they are so descended. In like manner, if this *Demonstration* be good, the *Jews* can prove their Traditions to be descended from *Moses* and the *Prophets*. *Secondly*, He says, that the *Form of these Traditions* is more *Ridiculous* than the *Canting of Gypsies*, or the *juggling of Hocuspocus*, because it consists in inventing the *Sense of the Scripture from the Mysteries, and Numbers, and Changes of Letters*. This is a gross *inexcusable Mistake*. For though the *Jews* have such a *Cabbala* (call'd *Gemetry*) as this which Mr. White describes;

describes ; yet that *Cabbala* which is argued in this SECT. Instance, and which our Saviour reproves in the *Pharisees* by the Name of Tradition, is quite another IX. thing, and among the *Jewish* Writers known by the Name of the *Unwritten or Oral Law* ; which they say was delivered to *Moses* on Mount *Sinai*, and by him conveyed to *Aaron* and *Joshua*, and the *Elders*, and successively delivered down from one Age to another ; and at last by *Rabbi Jehudah* compiled into one Volume which they call *Mishna*, or *δευτέρωσις*. And this does not consist in the Art of Numbring, Combining, or changing of Letters, as Mr. *White* imagines. But suppose it did so, and were more ridiculous than he conceits it to be ; the Instance would be so much the more conclusive against them, if what they affirm be true, That *Oral Tradition* is infallible, and that the Persuasion of a Traditionary Church in any Age, that such a Doctrine descended to them from *Christ* or *Moses*, be a demonstration that it did so : For if this be sufficient Evidence, 'tis nothing to the purpose what the Doctrine be either for *Matter or Form* : For if it be once demonstrated to have come from *Christ* or *Moses*, it is without any farther dispute to be received as of Divine Authority. So that Mr. *White* quite alters the state of the Question ; which was not whether the *Jewish Cabbala* be absurd and ridiculous, but whether the general persuasion of the *Jews* in any Age, that it descended to them by uninterrupted Tradition from *Moses*, be a Demonstration that it did so. If it be, then the *Jewish Cabbala* is as demonstratively of Divine Authority as the Oral Doctrine of the Papists. Thirdly, He says, *This Cabbala was a Doctrine delivered to few, and that with strict Charge to keep it from Publicity, and so communicate it again successively to a select Committee of a few, wherein (says he) you may see as fair an Opportunity for Juggling and Cozenage, as in our Case there is an Impossibility.* This I think is true of the *Cabbala*, which it (seems) Mr. *White*

PART had only in his view, but is a horrible mistake if he

III. speaks of the Oral Law which was contained in the *Mishna*, and which this *Instance* only intends. For

• In Præfat  
Sum. Tal-  
mud. of this *Maimonides* • says expressly, *That in every Age, from the time of Moses to Rabbi Jehudah, who compiled the Mishna, the Oral Law was publickly taught: And that after Rabbi Jehudah had compiled it into one Volume, the Israelites did generally write out Copies of it, and it was every where carefully taught, for fear least the Oral Law should by forgetfulness be lost among the Jews.* So that upon account of the publickness of the Doctrine, there is as great an impossibility of *Juggling and Cozenage* in the case of the *Jewish* as of the *Romish* Tradition. Besides, was *washing of Hands and Cups*, which they also pretended to have come down to them from *Moses*, and to have been constantly practiced in every Age, a secret thing? Was it not a *practical* Tradition, and performed in a sensible matter? If therefore no Age can conspire to impose upon the next in a plain Custom; and if an universal Tradition of such a thing cannot come in without such a Conspiracy: How could this be the persuasion of any Age, that *washing of Hands*, &c. was prescribed by *Moses* and practised in all Ages, if it had not truly been so?

§. 5. Secondly, As for *Instances* among *Christians*, whereof many remain yet upon Record; as namely, the various and opposite Traditions about the *Time of Easter*, and concerning the *Baptism of Hereticks*, and the Apostolical Tradition (as *St. Austin* calls it) concerning the *Admission of Infants to the Communion*; all which have been frequently urged in this Controversy, and none of them yet sufficiently answered; I shall to avoid tediousness, passing by these, insist only upon that of the *Chiliasm*; which in *Justin Martyr's* time was the Persuasion of all Orthodox Christians, that is (in *Mr. S's* Dialect) of all the *holders to Tradition*. For if notwithstanding the persuasion of that Age, that this Doctrine was descend-

ed



ed to them from the Apostles, it was not really so SECT. IX.  
descended; then the persuasion of Christians in any Age, that a Doctrine was brought down to them from the Apostles, is no Demonstration that it was so.

§. 6. To this Instance Mr. White answers <sup>b</sup> by tel- <sup>b</sup> Apol. ling us, that Eusebius says that this Tradition sprang <sup>p. 78,</sup> from Papias (a good but a credulous and simple man) who &c. it seems was mistaken in saying that it was the Apostles Doctrine. But for all this Justin Martyr says it was received by all Orthodox Christians in his Time, as a Doctrine descended to them from the Apostles. And if Justin said true, nothing can make more against their Demonstration of the Infallibility of Tradition, than the natural consequence from these two Sayings of Eusebius and Justin, which is this, That the mistake of one simple and credulous Man may in an Age or two, give occasion to the universal Entertainment of a Doctrine, as descended down to them from Christ and his Apostles, when there was no such Matter. Hath not Mr. White now done his Rule of Faith great Service by this Answer? But it is according to his manner in all his Writings to say any thing to remove a present Objection though never so much to the prejudice of his main Hypothesis; than which I do not know any quality in a Writer which doth more certainly betray the want either of Judgment or of Sincerity, or of a good Cause.

§. 7. And whereas he says, <sup>c</sup> 'That Irenæus his <sup>e</sup> Apol. Testimony proves it to be no Tradition; for he sets <sup>P. 81.</sup> down the supposed Words of our Saviour, which plainly shews it is a Story, not a Tradition; a Tradition being a sense delivered, not in set Words, but settled in the Auditors Hearts by Hundreds of different Expressions explicating the same meaning.' When I consider this Passage of Mr. White, I confess I cannot compliment him, and say (as he makes his Nephew do in the Dialogue <sup>d</sup> between them) <sup>d</sup> Rush-  
' I cannot but applaud your Discourse, it hath so <sup>worth,</sup> Dial. 4.  
pleasing <sup>Sec. 4.</sup>

PART. ' pleasing and attractive a Countenance. And again,  
 III. ' I am not able to oppose what you say by any  
 ' weighty Objection, your Arguments being not  
 ' only strong and nervous, but of so comely and winning a Complexion, &c.' I cannot (I say) speak all this of his present Argument; but I may deservedly apply to it the last part of his *Nephew's* Compliment, That it is an Argument so framed, *as if, without any evidence of its Consequence, it would persuade Men to believe it.* But to return an Answer to this Passage: It seems (according to Mr. *White*) that *Irenæus* was mistaken in the very Nature of Tradition: And if so learned a *Father* was ignorant in the common *Rule of Faith*, *what can we* (to use Mr. S's Words \* *undertakingly promise to weaker Heads?* Mr. S. instanceth in the *Creed* and *Ten Commandments* as the principle Traditions which Parents teach their Children; but now Mr. *White* can shew plainly that these are no *Traditions* but *Stories*, because *Tradition is a Sense delivered not in set Words*, &c. As if Christ and his Apostles could deliver no Doctrine unless they expressed the same thing an hundred several ways. But suppose they did so (which no man hath any Reason to imagine, because a thing may be expressed as plainly by one way as by an hundred, can no man deliver this Tradition who speaks it in any one of those Expressions? If one should imploy a Servant to carry a message, and (because Mr. *White* thinks this necessary) should settle the meaning of it in his Heart, by telling him the same thing in an hundred several Expressions; and the Servant should go and deliver this message in one of those very Expressions that his master used to him, and should say these were his Master's very Words; would not this be well enough?

No; if he had come to such a Philosopher as Mr. *White*, he would soon have given him to understand that he was not fit to bring a message, or to be credited

dited in it, who had so little Wit as not to know SECT.  
 that a message is a thing not to be delivered in *set* IX.  
*Words.* And now I would intreat Mr. *White* to re-  
 concile himself in this matter to his Friends. Mr.  
*Rushworth* says, *'Tis impossible to put fully, and beyond* Dial. 1.  
*all quarrel, the same sense in divers words:* Which, Sect. 6.  
 if it be true, I would fain know what certain Course  
 Mr. *White* can prescribe to explicate the same Mean-  
 ing by hundreds of different Expressions, and conse-  
 quently how Tradition can be infallibly conveyed,  
 by settling the sense of it in the Auditors Hearts, by  
 such Variety of Expressions. Mr. *Cressy* <sup>c</sup> likewise <sup>c</sup> Exomq.  
 (a zealous Assertor of Tradition) does affirm, *That* log. c. 10.  
*the primitive Churches were even to excess scrupulous in* Sect. 4.  
*maintaining the very Phrases of Traditionary Doctrines;*  
 which (according to Mr. *White*) plainly shews these  
 Doctrines to be Stories, not Traditions, because Tradi-  
 tion is a sense delivered not in set words. The same  
 Author complains, *a That few among their learnedest* <sup>d</sup> Ibid, c.  
*Masters of Controversy, propose the Points to be dis-* 19. Sect. 2.  
*puted between them and the Protestants in the Language*  
*of the Church.* By which, I suppose, he does not  
 mean, that these Controvertists were to blame in  
 that they did not settle the Sense of these Points by hun-  
 dreds of different Expressions explicating the same mean-  
 ing, but that they did not keep to the Words where-  
 in the Church had in Councils, or otherwise (if there  
 be any other way) declared her Sense of those Points.  
 Again he <sup>e</sup> says, *That St. Paul, referring to the Doc-* <sup>e</sup> Ib. c. 27.  
*rine settled by Oral Instruction, to shew the uniformity* Sect. 2.  
*of it every where, calls it a Form of wholesome Words.*  
 From whence we may conclude either that St. Paul  
 did not well to call the Traditionary Doctrine (as  
 Mr. *Cressy* says he does) a *Form of Words*, or else  
 (which is more probable) that Mr. *White* is mistaken  
 in saying, *That a Tradition is a Sense not delivered in*  
*set Words.* Farthermore, the same Mr. *Cressy* <sup>a</sup> tells <sup>a</sup> Ibid. c.  
 us, *That St. Augustine was careful not only to deliver* 28. Sect. 1.  
*Traditional*



PART III. *Traditional Truths themselves but the terms also in which those Truths were conveyed to his Times.* But now Mr. *White* could have informed St. *Augustine*, that this officious Care of his was not only superfluous but pernicious, to Tradition.

§. 8. But to return to *Justin's* Testimony; to which the Sum of Mr *White's* Answer is, That *Justin* esteem'd it not as a Point necessary to Salvation, but rather a Piece of Learning higher than the common; since he both acknowledges other Catholicks held the contrary, and entitles those of his Perswasion *κατὰ πάντα ὁρθογνώμεναι*, right in all Opinions, that is, wholly of his own Mind. It is not material to my purpose, whether or no *Justin* look'd upon this as a point necessary to Salvation, so long as it is evident that he looked upon it as a Divine Revelation, and part of the Christian Doctrine. And yet, it seems, he thought it a Point of more than ordinary importance, because he joins it with the Doctrine of the Resurrection, and says that it was not disowned by any but those who also denyed the Resurrection. But whereas Mr. *White* says, that *Justin* acknowledges other Catholicks to have held the contrary, I hope to make it evident, from the Scope and Series of his Discourse, that he acknowledges no such thing; but that the plain design of his Discourse is to shew, that this Doctrine was owned by all true Christians. For when *Trypho* asks him, <sup>b</sup> Whether the Christians did indeed believe that *Jerusalem* should be rebuilt, &c. he returns him this Answer, *I am not such a Wretch as to speak otherwise than I think. I have told thee before, that my self and many others (as ye all know) are of the Mind that this will come to pass. But, that many indeed of those Christians who are [not] of the the pure and pious Perswasion do not own this, I have intimated to thee.* That the negative Particle (though omitted in the Copy) ought to be thus inserted, will be clear to any one that considers what follows: For after he had spoken of those who disown his Doctrine,

<sup>b</sup> Dial  
cum *Tryph.*  
p. 306.  
Edit. Lutet  
1615.

he

he immediately adds, by way of farther Description **SECT.**  
of them, that though they are called Christians, yet **IX.**  
in truth they are not Christians, in these Words: *For*  
*of these (viz. the Disowners of this Doctrine) who*  
*are called indeed Christians, but are atheistical*  
*and impious Hereticks, I have shewed thee that they*  
*teach in all Points blasphemous, atheistical and absurd*  
*Things. But that ye may know that I do not say this*  
*for you only, I will, according to my ability, compile all*  
*these Discourses which have past between us into one*  
*Piece; in which I will by writing make Profession of*  
*this very thing which I now declare to you. For I do*  
*not chuse to follow Men or the Doctrines of Men, but*  
*God and such Doctrines as are from him. And though*  
*ye may have conversed with some who are called Chri-*  
*stians, and yet do not acknowledge this; but even dare*  
*to blaspheme the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac,*  
*and the God of Jacob; who also say that there is no*  
*Resurrection of the Dead, but that so soon as they die*  
*their Souls are received into Heaven: Do not count these*  
*Men Christians; no more than a Man, that considers*  
*things rightly, would own the Sadducees, and such like*  
*Sects, to be Jews, &c. But I myself, and as many*  
*Christians as are thoroughly of the right Persuasion,*  
*do both know that there shall be a Resurrection of the*  
*Flesh, and a thousand Years in Jerusalem, which shall*  
*be built, adorned and enlarged, &c. Can any thing*  
*be plainer than that Justin endeavours by this Dis-*  
*course to satisfy Trypho, that this Point they were*  
*speaking of was a Divine Doctrine, and owned to be*  
*so by all Christians; except such as did only bear the*  
*Name and Title of Christians, but were indeed blas-*  
*phemous Hereticks and Deniers of the Resurrection?*  
*By which Character, that he intends to describe the*  
*impious Sects of the Gnosticks will appear by and by.*  
*So that Mr. White must either allow the inserting of*  
*the negative particle (which Mr. Mede<sup>c</sup> proves to<sup>c</sup> Nov.*  
*have been omitted in the Copy, or else acknowledge Edit.*  
*that those who are Christians only in Name, but in*  
*Truth*

PART III. *Truth are impious blasphemous and absurd Hereticks,* may properly be said to be of the pure and pious Opinion of the Christians. And if only these be the other Catholics, whom Mr. White says *Justin acknowledges* to have held contrary to the Millenaries, I am contented he should make his best of them. If Mr. White should blame the inserting of the negative particle [not] into *Justin's* Text, as too great a boldness with the *Fathers*; it were easily answered, that the Sense evidently requires it: And in such a Case it is no Boldness, but such a Liberty as the most Learned of their own Interpreters and Commentators upon the *Fathers* do frequently take. And as for Mr. S. if he takes Offence at this, one may with Reason (since the Exigency of the Sense plainly requires the inserting of it) demand of him (what he unreasonably does of us in relation to all the affirmative Propositions of Scripture) to demonstrate that the particle [not] was not left out of this clause of *Justin* by those who transcribed the Book. But besides the Exigency of the Sense in this place, that the Negative ought to have been inserted, will appear by the Reference which *Justin* makes in this passage to something foregoing in the same Dialogue. 'I have (*says he*) declared to thee before, that my self and many others are of the Mind that this will come to pass. But, that many indeed of those Christians who are [not] of the pure and pious persuasion do not own this, I have intimated to thee. For of these, who are called indeed Christians, but are atheistical and impious Hereticks, I have shewed thee that they teach in all points blasphemous, atheistical, and absurd Things.' In these Words he plainly refers to some precedent passage, which if it can be found will be a certain Key to open to us the Sense of this Place. I know that Mr. Mede (perhaps not observing it) thought that passage to have been fraudulently expunged by the Enemies

P. 31.

Ibid.



mies of the *Millenary Opinion*: But it seems to me to SECT.  
 be still extant; for I find towards the Beginning of IX.  
 this *Dialogue*, after that *Justin* had endeavoured  
 to prove at large out of Scripture this glorious  
 coming of Christ, and to refute those who ap-  
 plied the *Texts* produced by him to that purpose  
 to *Hezekiah*, and to *Solomon*; whose falling off  
 to Idolatry he occasionally mentions; where-  
 upon *Trypho* objects to him, that many who were  
 called *Christians*, did also communicate in the  
 Idol-Feasts. To this, *I say*, I find *Justin* returning  
 this Answer: \**First*, He denies not that there are  
 such as these 'who own themselves Christians, and  
 ' confess the crucified Jesus to be both Lord and  
 ' Christ, and yet teach not his Doctrines, but the  
 ' Doctrines of seducing Spirits. *But, says he*, We  
 ' who are the Disciples of the true and pure Doc-  
 ' trine of Jesus Christ, are from this very thing the  
 ' more strengthened in our Faith, and become more  
 ' confirmed in the Hope which by him hath been  
 ' declared to us. For now we see those Things vi-  
 ' sibly and effectually accomplish'd, which he be-  
 ' fore-hand told us would be done in his Name.  
 ' For he said, many shall come in my Name, &c.'  
 By which *Hope* any one that reads the Antecedents  
 and Consequents, will plainly see that *Justin* means  
 the *Hope* of the *Millennium* (which he had been speak-  
 ing of before) and consequently of the *Resurrection*,  
 which he looked upon as having a strict Connexion  
 with the Doctrine of the *Millennium*, because (as  
 he tells us afterwards) *this Doctrine* was denied  
 by none but such as also denied the *Resurrecti-*  
*on*. And of these Men his Description runs on  
 in these Words, πολλοί, &c. *Many* (saith he) *both*  
*are and have been, that have come in the Name of Je-*  
*sus, and taught both to speak and do atheistical and*  
*blasphemous things; and are by us denominated from those*  
*Men from whom each of their Doctrines and Opinions*  
*had its Rise* (namely, as it follows, *Marcionites, Va-*  
*lentinians,*

\* P. 253.

PART III. *lentinians, &c.) and all these in their several ways teach Men to blaspheme the Creator of the Universe, and the Christ, whose coming was foretold by him, and the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But we have no Communion with them, as knowing them to be atheistical and impious, &c. This Passage in Hand, when I compare it with the Text before quoted, and consider the Words and Characters of them both, I cannot but believe it the very same that he refers to in those Words, I have declared to thee, I have intimated to thee, &c. If so the Matter in Controversy is clear, that the Doctrine of the Millennium was universal: If it be not the same, I could wish to be shew'd some other Place in this Dialogue where Justin makes any such Declaration or Intimation. In the mean while, by comparison of these Places, it is evident there are but two Sorts of Men that Justin speaks of. First, Who believe the Millennium;*

<sup>a</sup> Τῆς ἀλη-  
θινῆς καὶ  
καθαρᾶς δι-  
δασκαλίας.  
<sup>b</sup> Ὁρθογνώ-  
μονες.

<sup>a</sup> We the Disciples <sup>a</sup> of the true and pure Doctrine, <sup>b</sup> *&c. viz. My self and many others; again, My self and as many Christians as are thoroughly <sup>b</sup> of the right Persuasion.* Secondly, Who deny the Millennium, *many Christians, saith Justin: But what Christians? Of a right Persuasion. That, saith he, I have signified before. τοὺς γὰρ, &c. For I have shewed thee of them who are called Christians, but are indeed Atheists and impious Hereticks, that they teach blasphemous, and atheistical, and absurd things: And true it is, he did shew before, that those who denied the Millennium were many in number, and were called Christians, &c. but were Teachers of blasphemous and atheistical things, &c. and known to be Atheists and impious, &c. But he shewed it of none other besides these: So that if this Doctrine were likewise denied by many Christians of the pure and pious Persuasion, then Justin Martyr had foully forgot himself; but if not, then it is plain that the Transcribers have wronged Justin, by leaving out a Negative which ought to have been inserted.*

ed. It is worth observing by the way how Mr. SECT. *White* pleases himself with false and frivolous Criti- IX. cisms upon the Words πολλοὺς and ὀρθογνώμονες. False they are, as Mr. *White* shall know if he desires to hear any more of them ; and frivolous they are render'd by my preceding Discourse ; for which Reason I say no more of them. But I think he may do well hereafter (as Mr. S. <sup>a</sup> warily suggests) not to en-<sup>a</sup> p. 68. gage himself, nor to be book'd by others, out of his own infallible way, but leave it wholly to the <sup>b</sup> bird-<sup>b</sup> p. 69. witted Hereticks (as Mr. S. calls them) to perch upon the specifical Natures of Words, as he does of Things.

§. 9. Besides these *Instances* I have given of Doctrines and Practices, which Mr. S. cannot deny to have been innovated, I might instance likewise in the chief *Points* of Popery, and shew, that for all their Pretence to *Tradition*, they are really *Innovations*. But because this would engage me in tedious Disputes about particular *Points*, I will only single out one of their most fundamental *Doctrines*, viz. that of *Transubstantiation* ; concerning which I shall shew, that notwithstanding it is the universal Persuasion of the present *Roman Church*, yet they have not, nor can have any Assurance that it was the Doctrine of Christ, and that it is descended to them by an uninterrupted Tradition. I shall not at all contend against the Word *Transubstantiation* (which is generally acknowledged to be new) but only the thing signified by it, a substantial change of the Bread and Wine into the Body and Blood of Christ. And this I might shew at large not to have been the Doctrine of the ancient *Fathers*. But because Mr. *White* and Dr. *Holden*, and Mr. *Cressy* do so frequently and confidently tell us, that nothing is to be reputed a Traditionary Doctrine, the contrary whereof hath been publickly held by any Catholick who continued afterwards uncensured, and in the Communion of the Church : Therefore I shall content myself at present with one clear *Testimony*, and that of



PART of a very eminent *Person* in the Church, *St. Theodoret*, concerning whom *Pope Leo* (in an Epistle to him, at the end of *Theodore's Works*) gives this Testimony, That *in the judgment of the Apostolick See he was free from all stain of Heresy*. The Passage I intend is in his *Dialogues*, between a *Catholick* under the Name of *Orthodoxus*, and *Eranistes* who sustained the Person of an *Heretick*. *Eranistes*<sup>b</sup> maintaining that the Body of Christ was changed into the Substance of the Divinity, he illustrates it by this Similitude. 'As (says he) the Symbols of the Lord's Body and Blood are one thing before the Invocation of the Priest; but after the Invocation, are changed and do become another thing: So the Body of our Lord, after his Ascension, is changed into the Divine Substance.' To which *Orthodoxus* returns this Answer, 'Thou art caught in thine own Net. Because the mystical Symbols after Consecration do not pass out of their own Nature; for they remain in their former Substance, Figure and Appearance, and may be seen and handled even as before.' He does not only in express Words deny the Substance of the Symbols to be changed, but the occasion upon which these Words are brought in, and the scope of them (if they be of any force against the *Heretick's* Illustration) renders them incapable of any other Sense. When Mr. S. hath answered this Testimony, I have more for him.

• Distinct.  
l. 4. dist.  
10. qu. 1.  
n. 3.

That which I mainly urge against this *Doctrine* is, the monstrous Absurdities and Contradictions contained in it, together with the necessary Consequence of them. Several of the *Absurdities* of it are well brought together by *Scotus*, who tells us, that to prove the possibility of Christ's Body being contained under the species of Bread and Wine, many things must be proved which seem to involve a Contradiction; as 1. *That one quantum* (or extended Body) *may be together in the very same Place with another*. 2.

That

*That a less quantum may be together in the same Place* SECT. IX.  
*with a greater* ; i. e. a Body of less extension may occupy not only the same, but as much Room as a Body of greater extension does ; which is to say no more but this, that a Body less than another may be as great as that other even whilst it is less than it. 3. *That a greater quantum may be together with every part of a less quantum*, i. e. a Body that is greater than another, may be as little as the least part of that other Body which is less than it. 4. *That a Subject may be without quantity*, i. e. there may be a Body which hath no kind of Magnitude. 5. *That a Body may be somewhere where it was not before, without changing its Place*, i. e. a Body may be removed to another Place, whilst it remains still in the same Place. 6. *That a quantum may be without any quantitative Mode*, i. e. a Body may be extended without any manner of Extension. *The possibility of all which*, he saith (and I am very much of his mind) *it would be too tedious a work to prove* ; and therefore he only attempts to prove *the two last*, which (in all Reason) is work enough for one Man. All these *seeming* Contradictions (as he modestly calls them) are by his own Acknowledgment involved in this Doctrine. To these I might add many more ; as, How a thing can be said to be changed into another thing which did exist before : How a Body can be present in a Place after the manner of a Spirit : And yet this they affirm concerning the presence of Christ's Body in the Sacrament : One might as well say that Snow is black, not after the manner of blackness, but in the way of whiteness, which is to talk Nonsense after the manner of Sense : How the whole Body of Christ can be contained under the least sensible part of the Species of Bread, as is generally affirmed : Nay, and Scotus adds, that the whole Body is under every little part in its full proportion ; for he says expressly, *That the Head and the Foot of the Body of Christ are as far distant from one another in the Sacrament*,  
VOL. III. T

PART. *ment, as they are in Heaven:* As if one should say  
 III. that a Body, all whose parts lie within the Compass  
 of a small Pin's head, may yet within that little  
 Compass have Parts two Yards distant from one another: And lastly how the sensible *species* of Bread, *e. g. quantity, whiteness, softness, &c.* can exist without any *Subject*: To affirm the possibility of which (as generally they do) is to say that there may be quantities of *white and soft Nothings*; For this is the plain English of that Assertion, *that sensible Species may exist without a Subject*; which being stripp'd of those Terms of Art (*Species and Subject*) that do a little disguise it, it appears to be plain *Nonsense*.

Now the proper and necessary *consequence* of this Doctrine is to take away all certainty, and especially the certainty of Sense: For if that which my Sight and Taste and Touch do all assure me to be a little piece of Wafer, may notwithstanding this be Flesh and Blood, even the whole Body of a man; then notwithstanding the greatest assurance that Sense can give me, that any thing is this or that, it may be quite another thing from what Sense reported it to be. If so, then farewell the *Infallibility* of Tradition which depends upon the certainty of Sense; And which is a worse Consequence, if this Doctrine be admitted, we can have no sufficient Assurance that the Christian Doctrine is a Divine Revelation. For the Assurance of that depending upon the Assurance we have of the Miracles said to be wrought for the Confirmation of it, and all the Assurance we can have of a Miracle depending upon the certainty of our Sense; it is very plain that *that* Doctrine which takes away the certainty of Senses, does in so doing overthrow the certainty of Christian Religion. And what can be more vain than to pretend, that a Man may be assured that such a Doctrine is revealed by God, and consequently true, which if it be true, a man can have no assurance at all of any Divine revelation? Surely nothing is to be admitted by us



as certain, which being admitted we can be certain SECT. IX.  
of nothing. IX. It is a wonder that any man who con-  
siders the natural consequences of this *Doctrine* can  
be a Papist; unless he have attained to Mr. Cressy's  
pitch of *Learning*, who speaking of the difficult  
Arguments wherewith this *Doctrine* was pressed,  
says plainly, *I must answer freely and ingenuously,* Exomol  
*that I have not learned to answer such Arguments, but* c. 73.  
*to despise them.* And if this be a good way, when- Sect. 7.  
ever we have a mind to believe any thing, to scorn  
those Objections against it which we cannot solve;  
then Christian Religion hath no Advantage above  
the vilest Enthusiasms; and a Turk may maintain  
*Mahomet* and his *Alchoran* (in opposition to *Christ*  
and his *Doctrine*) against all that *Grotius*, or any o-  
ther hath said, if he can but keep his Countenance,  
and gravely say, *I have not learned to answer such ar-*  
*guments, but to despise them.*

§. 10. I will add one *Instance* more in another  
kind, to shew the Uncertainty of *Oral* and *Practical*  
Traditions, and that shall be the Tradition concern-  
ing Pope *Joan*; than which scarce any thing was e-  
ver more generally received in the *Historical* kind.  
Many and great *Authors* affirm it, as *Testifiers* of the  
general Fame. None ever denied it till the *Refor-*  
*mers* had made use of it to the disadvantage of Po-  
pery. Since that time not only Papists deny it, but  
several of our own Writers cease to believe it. *Phil.*  
*Bergomensis* tells the Story thus, *Anno* 858. *John the*  
*7th. Pope*, &c. 'The Tradition is, that this Person  
'was a Woman, &c. Here's an *Oral Tradition*. He  
concludes thus; 'In detestation of whose Filthi-  
'ness, and to perpetuate the Memory of her Name,  
'the Popes even to this Day going on *Procession*  
'with the People and Clergy, when they come to  
'the Place of her Travail, &c. in token of Abomi-  
'nation they turn from it, and go a by-way; and  
'being past that detestable Place they return into  
'the way, and finish their *Procession*. Here is one

PART <sup>c</sup> *Practical Tradition.* And for avoiding of the like  
 III. <sup>c</sup> Miscarriages, it was decreed that no one should  
 thereafter be admitted into St. Peter's Chair *prius-*  
<sup>c</sup> *quam per foratam sedem futuri Pontificis genitalia ab*  
<sup>c</sup> *ultimo Diacono Cardinale attrectarentur :* Here is  
<sup>c</sup> Ennead. another with a Witness: <sup>c</sup> *Sabellius* relates the same;  
 9. L. 1. and moreover says that this *Porphyry Chair* was in  
 his Time to be seen in the Pope's palace. He adds  
 indeed that *Platina* thinks that this Tradition of Pope  
*Joan* was not faithfully delivered to Posterity. But  
 however, (says he) such a Tradition there is concern-  
 ing the first *Practical Tradition.* *Platina* says that he  
 may not deny it. For the second he thinks the Chair  
 rather designed for a Stool for another Use, &c. He  
 concludes, *These things which I have related are com-*  
*monly reported, yet from uncertain and obscure Authors:*  
*Therefore I resolved* (says he) *briefly and nakedly to set*  
*them down, lest I should seem too obstinately and pertina-*  
*ciously to have omitted that which almost all affirm.* It  
 is no wonder that he says the *Authors* of this Report  
 were *uncertain and obscure*, since so very few writ  
 of it, so long as he acknowledges it to have been a  
*general Oral Tradition* attested by a solemn and con-  
 stant *Practice*; it has (according to Mr. S's Principles)  
 greater certainty than if it had been brought down  
 to us by a hundred Books written in that very Age.  
 So that here's an *Oral and Practical Tradition*, con-  
 tinued we are sure for some hundreds of Years, pre-  
 served and propagated by a solemn Practice of the  
 Popes, Clergy and People of *Rome* in their Procesi-  
 ons, and by a *notorious Custom* at the Election of every  
 Pope; and in a matter of so great Importance to  
 their Religion (the Honour of the See of *Rome*,  
 and the uninterrupted Succession from St. Peter be-  
 ing so nearly concerned in it) that, had it been false,  
 they had been obliged under pain of Damnation,  
 not only not to have promoted it, but to have used  
 all Means to have discovered the Falsity of it. There-  
 fore

fore Mr. S. is bound by his own Principles either to SECT. allow it for a Truth, or else to give an Account X. when and how it began; which may possibly be made out by *We Metaphysicians* (as he<sup>b</sup> styles himself, and his *Scientifical Brethren*) but I assure him it is past the skill of <sup>c</sup> *Note-Book Learning*. <sup>b</sup> P. 340. <sup>c</sup> P. 337.

SECT. X. *The fourth Answer to his second Demonstration.*

§. I. IT is not the present Persuasion of the Church of Rome, nor ever was, that their Faith hath descended to them by *Oral Tradition* as the sole Rule of it. And this being proved, the *Supposition* upon which his *Demonstration* is built falls to the Ground.

And for the Proof of this, I appeal to that <sup>a</sup> *Decree* of the Council of Trent, in which they declare, <sup>d</sup> *Decret. primum quartæ Sess.* That because the 'Christian Faith and Discipline are contained in written Books and unwritten Traditions, &c. therefore they do receive and honour the Books of Scripture and also Tradition [*pari pietatis affectu ac reverentia*] with equal pious Affection and Reverence;' which I understand not how those, do who set aside the Scripture, and make Tradition the sole Rule of their Faith. And consonantly to this *Decree*, the general Doctrine of the *Romish Church* is, that *Scripture and Tradition* make up the Rule of Faith. 'So the Roman Catechism (*set forth by order of the Council of Trent*) says<sup>c</sup> that the Sum<sup>e</sup> of the Doctrine delivered to the Faithful is contained in the Word of God, which is distributed into Scripture and Tradition.' *Bellarmino*<sup>c</sup> speaks <sup>e</sup> *De Verbo Dei, &c. l. 4. c. 12.* to the same purpose, 'That the Scripture is a Rule of Faith, not an entire but partial one. The entire Rule is the Word of God, which is divided into two partial Rules, Scripture and Tradition.' According to this, the adequate Rule of Faith is the *Word of God*; which is contained partly in *Scripture*, and partly in the *Tradition* of the Church. And that



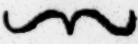
PART that *Scripture* is look'd upon by them as the *princi-*  
 III. *pal* Rule and *primary* Foundation of their Faith, and  
*tradition* as only supplying the defects of *Scripture*,  
 as to some *Doctrines* and *Rites* not contained in  
*Scripture*, must be evident to any one that has been  
 conversant in the chief of their controversial *Divines*.

<sup>a</sup> De Ver- *Bellarmino* <sup>a</sup> where he gives the *Marks* of a *Divine*  
 bo Dei *tradition* speaks to this purpose, That that which  
 non scrip- they call a *Divine tradition*, is such a *Doctrine* or  
 to. L. 4. c. *Rite* as is not found in *Scripture*, but embraced by  
 9. the whole Church; and for that Reason believed to  
 have descended from the Apostles. And he tells us

<sup>b</sup> Ibid. c. farther <sup>b</sup>, That the Apostles committed all to writ-  
 11. ting which was commonly and publicly preached;  
 and that all things are in *Scripture*, which Men are  
 bound to know and believe explicitly: But he says,  
 that there were other things which the Apostles did  
 not commonly and publicly teach; and these they  
 did not commit to *Writing*, but delivered them only  
 by *Word of Mouth* to the *Prelates and Priests* and  
*perfect Men of the Church*. And these are the Apo-  
 stolical Traditions he speaks of. <sup>c</sup> Cardinal Per-

<sup>c</sup> Reply <sup>c</sup> *ron* <sup>c</sup> says, That the *Scripture* is the Foundation of  
 Observat. <sup>c</sup> the *Christian Doctrine*, either mediately or imme-  
 3. c. 4. <sup>c</sup> diately. And that the Authority of unwritten  
<sup>d</sup> 2 Thes. <sup>c</sup> Tradition is founded in general on these Sentences  
 2. 15. <sup>c</sup> of the Apostle, <sup>d</sup> Hold the Traditions, &c. Again,  
<sup>e</sup> 2 Tim. <sup>c</sup> <sup>e</sup> The things which thou hast heard of me among  
 2. 2 <sup>c</sup> many Witnesses, commit to faithful Men, &c.  
<sup>e</sup> And that the Authority of the Church to preserve,  
 and especially to declare these, is founded in this  
<sup>f</sup> 1 Tim. <sup>c</sup> Proposition, viz. <sup>f</sup> That the Church is the Pillar  
 3. 15. <sup>c</sup> and Ground of Truth. So that according to him,  
<sup>c</sup> the primary Rule of Faith is the *Scripture*, in which  
<sup>c</sup> the Authority of tradition is founded. Mr. Knott

<sup>b</sup> Charity <sup>b</sup> <sup>b</sup> says expressly, We acknowledge the Holy Scrip-  
 maintain- <sup>c</sup> ture to be a most perfect Rule, for as much as a  
 ed, c. 2. <sup>c</sup> Writing can be a Rule; we only deny that it ex-  
 Sect. 1. <sup>c</sup> cludes, either *Divine Tradition*, though it be un-  
 written,

‘ written, or an external Judge to keep, to propose **SECT.**  
 ‘ to interpret it, &c.’ So that (according to him) **X.**  
*Scripture* is a perfect Rule, only it does not exclude   
*unwritten tradition*, &c. By which that he does not  
 understand (as Mr. S. does) a concurrent *oral tradi-*  
*tion* of all the same Doctrines which are contained  
 in *Scripture*, but other Doctrines not therein con-  
 tained, is plain from what he says elsewhere <sup>c</sup>, ‘ We <sup>c</sup> Reply to  
 ‘ do not distinguish Tradition from the written <sup>Mr. Chilling-</sup>  
 ‘ Word, because Tradition is not written by any, <sup>c. 2. §.</sup>  
 ‘ or in any Book or Writing; but because it is not <sup>170.</sup>  
 ‘ written in the *Scripture* or Bible; *Bellarmino* <sup>d</sup> also <sup>d</sup> De verbo  
 ‘ says the same.’ And as for the *interpreting of Scrip-* <sup>Dei, &c.</sup>  
*ture*, he tells us, that this is not the Office of a <sup>L 4. c. 2.</sup>  
*Rule*, but of a *Judge*. ‘ There is <sup>e</sup> says he, a <sup>e</sup> Charity  
 ‘ great and plain Distinction between a Judge and <sup>maintain-</sup>  
 ‘ a Rule. For as in a Kingdom the Judge hath <sup>ed. c. 2. §.</sup>  
 ‘ his Rule to follow, which are the received Laws <sup>3.</sup>  
 ‘ and Customs; which are not fit or able to declare,  
 ‘ and be Judges themselves, but that Office must  
 ‘ belong to a living Judge: So the Holy *Scripture*  
 ‘ is and may be a Rule but cannot be a Judge.’  
 Here he makes the *Scripture* as much a Rule for  
*Matters of Faith*, as the *Laws* of the Land are for  
*Civil Matters*. And in his Reply to Mr. Chilling-  
 worth, he hath a *Chapter* of above 150 Pages, the  
*Title* whereof is, *Scripture is not the only Rule of Faith*;  
 which (had he with Mr. S. believed *oral tradition*  
 to be the sole Rule of Faith) had been as absurd as  
 it would be to write a *Book* to prove that *Turks* are  
 not the *only Christians* in the World. Mr. Cressy  
 likewise (not very consistently to himself) lays down  
 this *Conclusion*; ‘ *The entire Rule of Faith is contain-* <sup>a</sup> Exomol.  
*ed not only in Scripture, but likewise in unwritten tra-* <sup>c. 20.</sup>  
*dition.*

§. 2. Now all this is as contrary as can be to Mr.  
*Rushworth*’s new Rule of Faith. Therefore Mr.  
*White* says <sup>b</sup> *They speak ill who teach that some things* <sup>b</sup> Tabul.  
*are known in the Church from scripture, some by Tra-* <sup>Suffrag.</sup>  

T 4
dition. p. 96.

PART *dition.* And Mr. Holden (in Opposition to those  
III. who make Scripture, any part of the Rule of Faith)

<sup>b</sup> Analyf. advances one of the most wild and uncharitable Positi-  
Fid. L. 1. ons that ever I yet met withal, viz. ‘‘ That if one

c. 6. ‘ should believe all the Articles of the Catholick

‘ Faith, &c. for this Reason because he thought

‘ they were all expressly revealed in Scripture, or

‘ implicitly contained so as they might be deduced

‘ from thence, and would not have believed them,

‘ had he not judged that they might be evinced from

‘ Scripture; yet this Man could be no true Catho-

‘C. 8. lick, Because (as he tells us afterwards ‘ we must

‘ receive *the Christian Doctrine* as coming to us by

‘ Tradition; for only by this means (excluding

‘ the Scriptures) Christ hath appointed revealed

‘ Truths to be received and communicated.’ In the

mean time Cardinal *Perron* (unless he altered his Mind)

is in a sad Case, who believed the *Authority of Tra-*

*dition* it self for this reason, because *it was founded*

*in Scripture.*

§. 3. And this *fundamental* Difference about the

*Rule of Faith*, between the *generality* of their *Divines*

and Mr. S’s *small Party*, is fully acknowledged by

‘L. I. c. 9. the Traditionists themselves. Dr. Holden says ‘ That

*their Divines who resolve Faith according to the com-*

*mon Opinion, do inevitably fall into that shameful Cir-*

*cle* (of proving the Divine Authority of the Scrip-

ture by the Church, and the Infallibility of the

Church back again by the Scripture) *because they dare*

*not build their Faith upon the natural Evidence and*

*Certainty of Tradition.* So that Dr. Holden’s way of

resolving Faith, is different from the *common Opini-*

‘L. I. c. 3. on of their *Divines*, which he says ‘ does not differ

*from the Opinion of those who resolve their Faith into*

*the private Spirits*; and this (according to Mr.

*White* ‘ is the very way of the *Calvinists*, and of the

*absurdest Sects.* Nay Mr. *White* says farther ‘ That

he will be content to *suffer all the Punishment that is*

*due to Calumniators, if the Roman Divines* (he there

speaks

‘ Exetaf.

p. 70.

‘ Ibid.



speaks of) do not hold the same Rule of Faith with the Calvinists, and all the absurdest Sects. So that it seems that the Calvinists, &c. do not in their Rule of Faith differ from the Papists, but only from Mr. White, Mr. S. &c. Now the Divines he there speaks of, are the Censors of Doctrines at Rome, according to whose Advice his infallible Holiness and the Cardinals of the Inquisition do usually proceed in censuring of Doctrines. Concerning these Divines he goes on to expostulate in this manner; <sup>a</sup> 'Shall we endure these Men to sit as Censors and Judges of Faith, who agree with Hereticks in the very first principle which distinguishes Catholicks from Hereticks? Again <sup>b</sup> These are thy Gods O Rome! <sup>b</sup> upon these thou dependest, whilst prating Ignorance triumphs in the Roman College.' And he says the same likewise of the generality of the School-Divines, whom he calls Scepticks, because they do not own his Demonstrative way. Infomuch that he tells us <sup>c</sup> 'That few sound Parts are left uninfected with this plague of Scepticism <sup>d</sup>; that this is an universal Gangrene <sup>e</sup>; that there are but few that go <sup>e</sup> the way of Demonstration, and these are either wearied out, or else live retiredly, or despair of any Remedy of these Things.' And indeed all along that Book he bemoans himself and his Traditional Brethren as a desolate and forlorn Party, who have Truth on their side, but want Company and Encouragement. So he tells us <sup>a</sup> 'That the true scientific Divines dare not profess their Knowledge, lest they should be exposed by the Sophisters of their Church to the derision and scorn, either of their Judges or of the People.

§. 4. So that upon Examination of the whole matter, it appears that Mr. S's Demonstration proceeds upon a false Supposition, That it is the Persuasion of their present Church, that Tradition is the sole Rule of Faith. For there is no such matter; unless Mr. S. mean

SECT.

X.

Ib. p. 73.

p. 144.

p. 64.

p. 149.

p. 67, 68.

p. 101.

PART. mean by *their Church* a few private Persons, who are

III. looked upon by those who have the chief Power in their Church as *Heretical*: As we may reasonably conjecture by the proceedings at *Rome* against Mr. *White*; many of whose Books are there condemned

Exetaf. P. 9. as 'containing Things manifestly heretical, erroneous in the Faith, rash, scandalous, seditious,

'and false respectively, &c.' and all this done, notwithstanding that the chief Subject of those Books is the Explication and Defence of this most *Catholick* Principle, *That Oral Tradition is the only Rule of Faith*.

To sum up then the whole Business: If nothing be to be owned for Christian Doctrine, (as the *Traditionist* say) but what is the general Persuasion of those who are acknowledged to be in the Communion of the *Roman Catholick Church*; then much less can this Principle (*that Oral Tradition is the sole Rule of Faith*) which is pretended to be the Foundation of the whole Christian Doctrine, be received as descended from *Christ* and his *Apostles*; since it is so far from being the general persuasion of *that Church at the present*, that it has been, and still is generally disowned. But Mr. *White* has a *salvo* for this. For

Apol. P. 38.

although he grants, 'That very many of their Schoolmen maintain that Tradition is necessary only for some Points not clearly expressed in Scripture, whence (he says) it seems to follow that they build not the whole Body of their Faith upon Tradition; yet he tells us, there is a vast difference betwixt relying on Tradition, and saying or thinking we do so.' Suppose there be; yet I hope that Mens saying that they do not rely on *Tradition* as their only Rule, is a better evidence that they do not than any Man's surmise to the contrary is that they do, though they think and say they do not; which is in effect to say that they do, though we have as much assurance as we can have that they do not. Besides, how is this Rule *self-evident to all even to the Rude Vulgar as to its ruling Power* (as Mr. S. affirms

affirms it is) when the greatest part even of the SECT. Learned among them *think and say* that it is not the only Rule? But Mr. *White* endeavours to illustrate this dark Point by a *Similitude*, which is to this <sup>a</sup> Ibid. p. Sense: As the *Scepticks* who deny this Principle,<sup>19.</sup> That Contradictions cannot be true at once, yet in their Lives and civil Actions proceed as if they owned it: So the *School-men*, though they deny Tradition to be the only Rule of Faith, yet by resolving their Faith into the Church which owns this Principle, they do also in Practice own it though they say they do not. So that the generality of learned *Papists* are just such *Catholicks* as the *Scepticks* are *Dogmatists*, that is, a company of absurd People that confute their Principles by their Practice. According to this reasoning, I perceive the *Protestants* will prove as good *Catholicks* as any, for they do only *think and say* that Tradition is not the Rule of Faith; but that they practically rely upon it, Mr. S. hath past his Word for them: For he assures us<sup>b</sup> (and <sup>b</sup> p. 30. & we may rely upon a Man that writes nothing but Demonstration) that 'if we look narrowly into the bottom of our Hearts, we shall discover the natural method of Tradition to have unawares settled our Judgments concerning Faith; however, when our other Concerns awake Design in us, we protest against it, and seem perhaps to our unreflecting selves to embrace and hold to the mere guidance of the letter of Scripture.' So that in reality we are as good *Catholicks*, and as true holders to Tradition as any *Papists* of them all, at the bottom of our Thoughts and in our settled Judgment; however we have taken up an Humour to protest against it, and may seem perhaps to our unreflecting selves to be protestants.

§. 5. Thus much may suffice to have spoken to his two great Arguments; or 'as he (good Man)<sup>c</sup> p. 173. unfortunately calls them Demonstrations; which yet to



PART to say Truth are not properly *his*, but the *Author*  
 III. of *Rushworth's* Dialogues, the main Foundation of  
 which *Book* is the Substance of these Demonstrations. Only before I take leave of them, I cannot  
 p. 163. but reflect upon a Passage of Mr. S's <sup>d</sup> wherein he  
 tells his Readers that they are not 'obliged to bend  
 'their Brains to Study his Book with that severity  
 'as they would do an Euclid;' meaning perhaps  
 one of Mr. *White's* *Euclids*; for it does not appear by  
 his way of Demonstration that ever he dealt with any  
 other. As for the true *Euclid*, I suppose any one  
 that hath tasted his Writings, will at the reading of  
 Mr. S's unbend his *Brains* without bidding, and  
 smile to see himself so demurely discharged from a  
*study* so absurd and ridiculous.

SECT. XI. *Concerning some other Advantages of Tradition, &c.*

§. 1. I Should now take into Consideration his  
 Ninth *Discourse*, in which he pretends to  
 open the incomparable strength of the Church's human  
 Authority, and the Advantages which accrue to it  
 by the supernatural Assistances of the Holy Ghost:  
 But that there is nothing material in it, which hath  
 not been answered already. Only I desire him to  
 explain, how the supernatural Assistances of the  
 Holy Ghost can according to his Principles, add to  
 our Assurance of the Certainty of Tradition. Be-  
 cause we can have no greater Certainty of the super-  
 natural Assistance of the Holy Ghost, than we  
 have that there is an Holy Ghost, and of this we  
 can have no certainty (according to Mr. S.) but by  
 Tradition, which conveys this Doctrine to us.  
 And if Tradition of itself can infallibly assure us  
 that there are supernatural Assistances of the Holy  
 Ghost, then a Man must know that Tradition is in-  
 fallible antecedently to his Knowledge of any  
 supernatural Assistance. And if so, what can any  
 supernatural Assistance add to my Assurance to the  
 Certainty

Certainty of Tradition, which I do suppose to be SECT. XI.  
 infallible before I can know of any supernatural

Assistance? Can any thing be more ludicrous, than to build first all our certainty of the Assistance of the Holy Ghost upon the Certainty of Tradition, and then afterwards to make the Certainty of Tradition to rely upon the Assistance of the Holy Ghost? As if that could contribute to our Assurance of the Certainty of Tradition, which unless Tradition be first supposed certain, is it self wholly uncertain.

§. 2. The Conclusion of this Ninth *Discourse* is somewhat Ecstatical ; possibly from a sudden disorder of his Fancy upon the Contemplation of his own Performances, to see what a *Man* he has made himself (with the help of *Rushworth's Dialogues*) or rather what his *Party* has made him by the Office they put upon him : For it seems (by his telling) <sup>a</sup> Mr. *Cressy*, and the rest are ordained to ca-  
 jole the *Fools*, leaving him the way of Reason and Principles ; and that himself is chosen out to demonstrate to the *Wise* or those who judge of Things per  
*altissimas causas*. In the Discharge of which glorious Office, he declares that he intends no confutation of those Authors which Mr. *Cressy* and others have meddled with : ‘ Yet if any will be so charitable as to judge he hath solidly confuted them, because he hath radically and fundamentally overthrown all their Arguments, &c.’ he shall rejoice and be thankful. That the <sup>b</sup> intelligent Reader (for  
 he writes to none but such) may also rejoice with him, I shall recite the whole Passage, for it is thick of Demonstration, and as likely as any in his Book to have the *altissimas causas* contained in it.

§. 3. ‘ It would require a large Volume to unfold particularly how each Virtue contributes to shew the inerrable Indeficiency of Tradition, and how the Principles of almost each Science are concern’d in demonstrating its Certainty : A-

‘ rithmetick

PART  
III.

' *rithmetick* lends her Numbering and Multiplying  
 ' Faculty, to scan the vast Number of Testi-  
 ' fiers; *Geometry* her Proportions, to shew a kind  
 ' of infinite strength of Certitude in Christian Tra-  
 ' dition, above those Attestations which breed Cer-  
 ' tainty in human Affairs; *Logick* her Skill to frame  
 ' and make us see the Connexions it has with the  
 ' Principles of our Understanding; *Nature* her  
 ' Laws of Motion and Action; *Morality* her first  
 ' Principle that nothing is done *gratis* by a Cog-  
 ' noscitive Nature, and that the Body of Tradition-  
 ' onary Doctrine is most conformable to Practical  
 ' Reason: *Historical Prudence* clears the Impossibi-  
 ' lity of an *undiscernable* Revolt from Points so de-  
 ' scended and held so sacred: *Politicks* shew this to  
 ' be the best way imaginable to convey down such  
 ' a Law as it concerns every Man to be skilful in;  
 ' *Metaphysicks* engages the Essences of Things, and  
 ' the very Notion of *Being*, which fixes every  
 ' Truth, so establishing the scientificall Knowledges  
 ' which spring from each particular Nature by  
 ' their first Causes or Reasons exempt from Chan-  
 ' ges or Motion. *Divinity* demonstrateth it most  
 ' worthy God, and most conducive to bring Man-  
 ' kind to Bliss. Lastly, *Controversy* evidences the  
 ' total Uncertainty of any thing concerning Faith  
 ' if this can be uncertain, and makes use of all the  
 ' rest to establish the Certainty of this *First Princi-*  
 ' *ple.*' A very fit Conclusion for such *Demonstrati-*  
 ' *ons* as went before. It is well Mr. S. writes to none  
 ' but intelligent Readers; for were it not a thousand  
 ' Pities, that so manly, and solid, and convincing a  
 ' Discourse as this should be cast away upon Fools?

## SECT. XII. Mr. S's Corollaries considered.

§. I. **A**S for his Corollaries, supposing them  
 to be rightly deduced from his former Discourses, they must of necessity fall with  
 them.



them. For they signify nothing, but upon this SECT. Supposition that his foregoing Discourses are true. XII. And yet this being granted, it were easy to shew that most of them are grossly faulty. For *First*, Several of them are plainly coincident. The *Second*, viz. *None can with right pretend to be a Church, but the followers of Tradition*, is the very same in sense with the 11th, viz. *No company of Men hang together like a Body of a Christian Commonwealth or Church, but that which adheres to Tradition*. So likewise the 12th, and 14th. are contained in the 15th: The 16th and 17th. in the 19th: The 16th, 17th, 18th, and 19th, in the 21st. And the 32d. and 34th, in the 31st. *Secondly*, Divers of them are manifestly absurd, as the 12th, 13th, 14th, 16th, 17th, 18th, 19th: The Sum of which is, That there is *no arguing against Tradition from Scripture, or the Authority of the Church, or Fathers and Councils, or from History and Testimonial Writings, or from contrary tradition, or reason, or any Instances whatsoever*: Which is as much as to say, If this *Proposition* be true, *that tradition is certain*, then it cannot by any kind of argument be proved to be false. But is this any peculiar Confectory from the Truth of this *Proposition*? Doth not the same follow from every Proposition, That if it be true, it cannot be proved to be false? Yet no Man was ever yet so frivolous, as to draw such a Consequence from the supposed Truth of any Proposition. His 23d. also is singularly absurd, that *there is no possibility of arguing at all against tradition rightly understood, or the living Voice of the Catholick Church, with any shew of Reason*. These are large Words. It might have contented a reasonable Man to have said, that no good Argument could be brought against it: But he is jealous of his *Hypothesis*, and can never think it safe till it be shot-free; nor will that content him, but it must be also impossible for any one

PART. to make a *shew* of shooting at it. This were, I

III. confess, a peculiar Privilege of Mr. S's *Discourses* above other Mens, it they were (as he says) by Evidence of Demonstration so secured, that not only no substantial Argument could be brought against them, but that even the most subtil *Schoolman* of them all should not be able to come near them with so much as a *videtur quod non*. But it may be he means no more by this *Corollary*, than what he said in the 18th, viz. *That no solid Argument from Reason can be brought against tradition*: If so, then the Sense of his 23d. *Corollary* must be this, That there is no possibility of arguing at all against Tradition with any *solid shew*, or *substantial shadow* of Reason; which would be a little inconvenient. I will instance but in one more, his 40th, which is this, *the knowledge of tradition's certainty is the first Knowledge or Principle in Controversial Divinity*; i. e. *without which nothing is known or knowable in that Science*. Which is to infer, that because he hath with much pains proved the certainty of Tradition, therefore it is *self-evident*, i. e. needed no Proof. Nay, it is to conclude the present Matter in Controversy and that which is the main Debate of his Book, to be the first Principle in Controversial Divinity, i. e. such a Proposition as every one ought to grant before he can have any Right to dispute about it. This is a very prudent Course, to make *begging the Question* the first Principle in Controversy; which would it but be granted, I am very much of his Mind that the Method he takes would be the best way to make Controversy a Science, because he that should have the Luck or Boldness to beg first, would have it in his Power to make what he pleased certain.

§. 2. Were it worth while, I might farther pursue the Absurdities of his *Corollaries*. For they are not so terrible as he makes shew of, by his telling Dr. Casaubon \* that *Sure-footing and its Corollaries*

*laries may put him out of his Wits:* Which tho' in-  
tended for an Affront to the Doctor, yet it may  
be mollified with a good Interpretation; for if the  
reading of wild and fantastical stuff be apt to dis-  
order a very learned Head, then so far Mr. S's Say-  
ing may have Truth in it. SECT. XII.

It remains only that I requite his 41. *Corol.*  
not with an equal Number, but with two or  
three natural *Confectaries* from the Doctrine of his  
Book.

*First,* No Man can certainly understand the mean-  
ing of any Book whatsoever, any farther than the  
Contents of it are made known to us by a Concur-  
rent *Oral Tradition*. For the Arguments whereby  
*he* and Mr. *Rushworth* endeavour to prove it im-  
possible without *Tradition* to attain to the certain  
Sense of Scripture, do equally extend to all other  
Books.

*Secondly,* The Memory of Matters of Fact done  
long ago may be better preserved by general Ru-  
mour than by publick Records. For this is the  
plain *English* of that Assertion, That Oral Tradition  
is a better and more secure Way of Conveyance  
than Writing.

*Thirdly,* That the Generality of Papists are no  
Christians: For if (as he affirms) Tradition be  
the sole Rule of Faith, and those who disown this  
Rule be *ipso facto* cut off from the Root of Faith, i. e.  
unchristian'd; And if (as I have shewn) the Ge-  
nerality of Papists do disown this Rule: Then it is  
plain that they are no Christians.

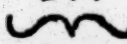


## PART IV.

*Testimonies concerning the Rule of Faith.*

## SECT. I. Mr. S's Testimonies examined.

PART §. I. **T**HUS far in the way of Reason and  
IV. Principles. The rest is Note - Book

 Learning, which he tells us<sup>a</sup> he is not much a  
\* P. 337. Friend to ; and there is no kindness lost, for it  
is as little a Friend to him and his Cause as he can  
be to it. I shall first examine the *Authorities* he  
brings for *Tradition* ; and then produce express *Testi-*  
*monies* in behalf of *Scripture*. In both which I shall  
be very brief ; in the one, because his Testimonies  
require no long Answer ; in the other, because  
it would be to little purpose to trouble Mr. S.  
with many *Fathers*, who, for ought appears by  
his *Book*, is acquainted with none but *Father*  
*White*, as I shall shew hereafter. By the way, I  
cannot much blame him for the Course he uses  
to take with other Men's Testimonies, because it  
is the only way that a Man in his Circumstances  
can take ; otherwise, nothing can be in self more  
unreasonable, than to pretend to answer Testimo-  
nies by ranking them under so many *faulty Heads* ;  
and having so done, Magisterially to require his  
*Adversary* to vindicate them, by shewing that  
they do not fall under some of those *Heads*, though  
he have not said one Word against any of them par-  
ticularly ; nay, tho' he have not so much as recited  
any one of them ; for then the Trick would be  
spoiled, and his Catholick Reader who perhaps  
may believe him in the *general*, might see Rea-  
son not to do so if he should descend to *particu-*  
*lars*, which (as he well observes) would make his

<sup>b</sup> P. 161. <sup>b</sup> *Discourse to look with a contingent Face.*

§. 2. I begin with his three *Authorities* from **Scripture**; which when I consider, I see no Reason why he (of all men) should find fault with my Lord Bishop of Down's *Dissuasive*, for being so *thin and slight in Scripture Citations*. Nor do I see how he will answer it to Mr. *Rushworth*, for transgressing that prudent *Rule* of his, viz. <sup>b</sup> 'That the Catholick should never undertake to convince his Adversary out of Scripture, &c.' For which he gives this substantial Reason, <sup>c</sup> 'because *this were to strengthen his Opponent in his own Ground and Principle*, viz. *That all is to be proved out of Scripture*; which he tells us presently after is no more fit to convince, than *a Beetle is to cut withal*; meaning it perhaps of *Texts* so applied as these which follow. <sup>d</sup> 'This shall <sup>d</sup> *Isa. 35. 8.*  
' be to you a direct way, so that Fools cannot err <sup>e</sup> 'in it. <sup>e</sup> 'This is my Covenant with them, faith <sup>e</sup> *Isa. 59.*  
' the Lord; my Spirit which is in thee, and my <sup>21.</sup>  
' Words which I have put in thy Mouth shall not  
' depart from thy Mouth, and from the Mouth of  
' thy Seed, and from the Mouth of thy Seeds Seed  
' from henceforth for ever. <sup>d</sup> 'I will give my Law <sup>d</sup> *Jer. 31.*  
' in their Bowels, and in their Hearts will I write  
' it.' From which *Texts* if Mr. S. can prove *Tradition to be the only Rule of Faith*, any better than the *Philosophers Stone*, or the *Longitude* may be proved from the first Chapper of *Genesis*, I am content they should pass for valid Testimonies: Though I might require of him (by his own Law) before these *Texts* can signify any thing to his purpose, to demonstrate that this is the *Traditionary Sense* of these *Texts*, and that it hath been universally in all Ages received by the Church under that Notion; and then to shew how it comes to pass that so many of the *Fathers*, and of their own *Commentators* have interpreted them to another Sense: And *lastly*, to shew how *Scripture* which has no certain Sense but from Tradition, and of the Sense whereof Tradition cannot assure us unless it be the *Rule of Faith*; I say, how

PART. *Scripture* can prove Tradition to be the *Rule of Faith*,  
 IV. which can prove nothing at all unless Tradition be  
 first proved to be the *Rule of Faith*. This I take to  
 be as *shameful a Circle*, as that wherewith Dr. Holden  
 upbraids the Generality of his *Brethren*.

§. 3. I proceed to his *Authorities* from *Fathers*  
 and *Councils*; all which (not one of them excepted)  
 he hath taken out of Mr. *White's Tabula Suffragiales*,  
 without the least Acknowledgment from whom he  
 had them. And that it might be evident that he  
 had not consulted the Books themselves for them, he  
 hath taken them with all their Faults, and with the  
 very same Errors of Citation which Mr. *White* had  
 been guilty of before him. So that though he is  
 pleased to say of himself that *he is a bad Transcriber*,  
 yet I must do him that right, to assure the Reader  
 that he does it very punctually and exactly.

p. 239.

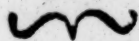
§. 4. He begins with *Councils*, of which he tells  
 us *he will only mention three in several Ages*.

The first is the *First Synod of Lateran*. One might  
 have expected, after he had told us he would mention  
 three in several Ages, he should have produced  
 them according to the Order of Time, and have be-  
 gun with the Council of *Sardica*, which was near  
 300 years before the *Lateran*. But there was a good  
 reason why the *Lateran* should be first produced,  
*viz.* because it is mentioned before the other in Mr.  
*White's Book*. Well, but what says this Synod? *We*  
*all confess unanimously, and consequently with one heart*  
*and mouth, the Tenets and Sayings of the Holy Fathers;*  
*adding nothing, substracting nothing of those things*  
*which are delivered us by them; and we believe as the*  
*Fathers have believed, we preach so as they have taught.*  
 The force of which Testimony Mr. S. lays upon the  
 Word *delivered*, as if that Word where-ever it is  
 met with in *Councils* or *Fathers*, must needs be un-  
 derstood of *oral delivery*; whereas it is a general  
 Word indifferently used for Conveyance either by  
*Writing* or *Word of Mouth*. In this place it plainly  
 refers



refers to the *Writings* of particular *Fathers*, out of whom a long Catalogue of Testimonies against the Heresy of the *Monothelites* had been read just before this Declaration of the Synod. Now what signifies this to *Oral Tradition's* being the *Rule of Faith*, that this Synod declares her Faith, in Opposition to the Heresy of the *Monothelites*, to be consonant in all things to those Testimonies which had been produced out of the *Fathers* ?

The next is the *Council of Sardica* ; out of an *Epistle* of which *Council* he cites these Words, *We have received this Doctrine, we have been taught so, we hold this Catholick Tradition, Faith and Confession.* Which are general Words, and differently applicable to *Oral Tradition*, or Writing, or both. But be they what they will, Mr. S. ought not to have been ignorant, that this Council was rejected by St. *Austin* and other Orthodox *Fathers*, as <sup>a</sup> *Baronius* acknowledges ; and which is more, that the latter Part of this *Epistle* (out of which Part Mr. S. cites these Words) which contains a *Confession of Faith*, is by <sup>b</sup> *Baronius* (and after him by *Binius*) proved to have been surreptitiously added. For though it be found in *Theodoret*, and mentioned by *Sozomen* ; yet *Baronius* thinks that it was the *Arian Confession* composed by the false Synod of *Sardica* which sat at the same time ; and that *Sozomen* lighting upon it, perhaps mistook it for the Confession of the Orthodox Synod of the same Name. However that be, he proves out of *Athanasius*, and from the Testimony both of the Eastern and Western Bishops, that the Council of *Sardica* did not so much as add one Word or Tittle, no not so much as explain any thing in the *Nicene Faith*. But Mr. *White* says nothing of this, and therefore Mr. S. could not, who is no *Speculator* in these Matters, but only as a *Testifier* delivers down these Authorities to us as he received them by Hand from Mr. *White* ; and if the Word *Tradition* be but in them, they are *Demonstrative*.

PART  
IV.

\* Quodlibet 6. cited by *Epipencæus* in 2d. Epist. ad Tim. c. 4.

As for his *Testimonies* from the Second Council of *Nice* (which he calls the *Seventh General Council*) who pretended their Doctrine of *Image-worship* to have descended to them by an *uninterrupted Tradition*, and proved it most doughtily by Texts of Scripture ridiculously wrested, by impertinent Sayings out of obscure and counterfeit Authors, and by *fond* and *immodest Stories* (as is acknowledged by Pope <sup>a</sup> *Adrian* the 6th) of *Apparitions* and *Womens Dreams*, &c. for which I refer the Reader to the Council itself; which is such a mess of Fopperies, that if a *general Council* of Atheists had met together with a design to abuse Religion by talking ridiculously concerning it, they could not have done it more effectually: I say, as for his Testimonies from this Council, I shall refer Mr. S. to that *Western Council* under *Charles the Great*, which a little after at *Francfort* condemned, and also fully confuted the Decisions of this Council, calling their pretended *Tradition of Image-worship* [putidissimam Traditionem] a *most stinking Tradition*.

These are his Authorities from Councils; *Where* (says he) *we see General Councils relying on the teaching of the Fathers or fore-going Church, and on the Church's Tradition as their Rule*, &c. Where does he see any such Matter? Or where does he see *General Councils*? Was the Council of *Lateran* a General one? Or was the Council of *Sardica*? If it was, let him shew how the *Second of Nice* could be the *seventh General Council*. Mr. *White* must write more explicitly, and say which are *General Councils*, which not, otherwise he will lead his Friends into dangerous Mistakes.

§. 4. *After Ancient Councils* (not so ancient neither) *let us* (says he) *give a glance at Fathers*. *Glance* is a modest Word, and yet I doubt whether ever the *Fathers* had so much as that from him. Before I speak particularly to his Testimonies from the *Fathers*, I shall mind him of what Mr. *Rushworth*

<sup>b</sup> Dial. 3. Sect. 13. says in general, viz. <sup>b</sup> 'That he who seeks Tradition  
' in the Fathers, and to evince it by their Testi-  
' mony,

‘mony, takes an hard Task upon him, &c. Again, SECT. I.  
 ‘As in other Points, so even in this of the Reso-  
 ‘lution of Faith, as Doctors seem to differ now-a-  
 ‘days, so might the Fathers also.’ If this be true, Ibid.  
 Mr. S. is not likely by a few Testimonies out of  
 the *Fathers* to prove that *Tradition* is the sole *Rule*  
 of *Faith*. But let us see what he has done towards  
 it.

He begins with a saying of Pope *Celestine* to the  
 Fathers of the *Ephesine* Council. ‘Now there-  
 ‘fore we must act with a common endeavour to pre-  
 ‘serve things believed, and retained to this very  
 ‘time by Succession from the Apostles.’ *Binius’s*  
 other *Reading* [of  $\delta \delta \alpha \chi \eta \varsigma$  for  $\delta \iota \alpha \delta \omicron \chi \eta \varsigma$ ] quite spoils the  
 force of this Citation which Mr. S. puts upon the  
 Word *Succession*. But read it how he will; why  
 may not the Christian Doctrine be said to come by  
*Succession from the Apostles*, when it is transmitted to  
 us by scripture, as well as when by *Oral Tradition*?  
 I am sure the same *Celestine* in an *Epistle* to *Cyrl*,  
 commends him for defending the Faith by *Scripture*:  
*This* (says he) *is a great Triumph of our Faith, to de-*  
*monstrate our Opinions so strongly, and to overthrow*  
*the contrary, by Testimonies from Scripture.* And  
 neither in this *Epistle*, nor the other, does he make  
 any mention of *Oral Tradition*.

Next he cites that known Place in *Irenæus*: But  
 what if the Apostles had not left us the Scriptures,  
 ought we not to follow the Order of Tradition, &c?  
 This makes clearly against him; for it implies, that  
 now the Apostles have left us the Scriptures, we  
 ought to follow them. The other Passage he cites  
 out of *Irenæus*, Lib. 1. c. 3. is a clear Eviction  
 that he did not consult the Book. For he puts two  
 Sayings together which he had met with in Mr.  
*White*, immediately one after the other; and be-  
 cause Mr. *White* had cited Lib. 1. c. 3. for the  
 first Saying, and brought in the other immediately  
 upon it with an (*Et rursus*) *Again*, &c. Therefore



PART IV. Mr. S. (who is of a right Traditional Temper, which is to take things easily upon Trust himself, and require Demonstration from others) concluded that these *Sayings* were in the same Place, though in truth they are in several Books. As for the Testimony it self, there is nothing in it to Mr. S's Purpose besides the Word *Tradition*, which *Irenæus* does often apply to Scripture as well as *Oral Tradition*; and there is nothing in this Place to determine it to *Oral Tradition*.

His Testimonies out of *Origen* will do him less stead: For every one that hath been conversant in the Writings of that *Father*, knows what he means by the *Church's Tradition* preserved by *Order of Succession*, viz. The mystical Interpretations of Scripture, which (he says) were delivered by the Apostles to the Governors of the Church, and by them down from Hand to Hand. If this be the *Tradition* Mr. S. contends for, *Origen* is at his Service; if it be not, I assure him he is not for his turn.

\* Advers.  
Helvid.

\* His opin-  
ion confi-  
rms tot O-  
riginalia  
Instru-  
menta  
Christi de-  
lere Mar-  
cion ausus  
est, ne  
Caro ejus  
probare-  
tur. Ex  
qua, oro  
te, autori-  
tate, &c.

Next comes *Tertullian*, concerning whom (as also *Origen*) the papist upon occasion thinks it enough to reply in St. *Hierem's* Words \* *As for Tertullian, I have nothing to say of him but that he is not a Man of the Church*. Whatever he was, these are his Words, *If thou beest but a Christian, believe what is [traditum] delivered*. And here's nothing again but the Word *delivered*; which (as I have said) is indifferent to *Written* or *Oral Tradition*, if the Circumstances do not determine it to one, as here they do (very unluckily for Mr. S.) to the *Scripture*. For he disputes here against *Marcion*, who denied the Flesh of Christ; and who to maintain that, denied his Nativity, and expunged the whole History of it out of the Gospel; But (saith *Tertullian*) *by what Authority dost thou this? If thou be a Prophet, foretell something; If an Apostle, preach publicly; If Apostolical, be of the Apostle's Mind; If no more but a Christian,*

*Christian, believe what is delivered.* And where de-  
 livered? But in those *Instruments* or Books of the  
 Gospel, out of which (as *Tertullian* immediately be-  
 fore tells us) *Marcion* had made bold to expunge this  
 Story.

As for his Testimonies out of *Athanasius*, the two  
 first of them prove nothing but that *Faith comes down*  
*from our Ancestors*, or was by them *delivered to us*;  
 which no Body denies: Nor is there a Word in  
 either of them concerning *Oral*, in opposition to  
*Written Tradition*. The third Testimony is out of  
 an Epistle to *Epiſtetus*, to whom *Athanasius* writing  
 concerning those who held Christ's Body to be Con-  
 substantial with his Divinity, tells him this was so  
 gross a Conceit, that it needed no solicitous Confu-  
 tation; but that it would be a sufficient Answer to  
 say in general, the *Orthodox Church was not of that*  
*Mind, our Fathers did not think so*. From whence  
 Mr. S. infers that *Tradition is held by him a sole suf-*  
*ficient Rule of Faith and the only Answer to be given*  
*why we reject Points from Faith, &c.* But if he had  
 consulted the Book, he would not have inferred that  
 this was *the only Answer to be given, &c.* For it  
 immediately follows, *But least from our being wholly*  
*silent, the Inventors of evil Things should take occasion*  
*to be more impudent, it will be good to recite a few Pas-*  
*sages out of Scripture, &c.* And from thence he  
 confutes them at large. It was so gross an Error,  
 that he thought it might be sufficient, without  
 bringing particular Arguments out of Scripture a-  
 gainst it, to say that it was contrary to the ancient  
 Faith; but yet lest they should (if he had said no  
 more) have taken Boldness from thence and thought  
 that nothing more could be said against it, therefore  
 he confutes it from particular Texts of Scripture.  
 And what in his Opinion was the *sufficient Rule of*  
*Faith*, Mr. S. might have seen at the beginning  
 of this Epistle, from these Words, *That Faith which*  
*was professed by the Fathers in that Council (viz. the*  
*Nicene)*

**PART.** *Nicene*) according to the Scripture, is to me sufficient,  
**IV.** &c. It seems that Scripture was to him the Rule  
 and Standard whereby to judge even the *Creeeds* of  
 General Councils.

Mr. S. says he will be shorter in the rest, and so will I. For what is to be said to Testimonies brought at a Venture? When he that brings them, had he read the Books themselves, could not have had the Face to have brought them. Such is this out of <sup>c</sup> *Stromat.*  
 L. 7. *Clem. Alexand.* As if one of a Man becomes a Beast, like those infected with Circe's Poyson; so he hath forfeited his being a Man of God and faithful to our Lord, who spurns against Ecclesiastical Tradition, and leaps into Opinions of human Election. Mr. S. knows whose way of quoting this is, to pick a bit out of the midst of a Text that sounds something towards his purpose, and leave out the rest which would make it evident to be meant just contrary. Yet I cannot charge this wholly upon Mr. S. whose implicit Faith were it not for his culpable Ignorance might excuse him. But for his Seducer Mr. *White*, how he can acquit himself of so foul an Imputation, I leave it to any ingenuous Papist to judge, when I have nakedly set the whole Passage before him. *Clement* speaking of Hereticks who relinquish the Scripture, or abuse it by wresting it to their Lusts, says *Men who deal in Matters of highest Importance, must need commit great Errors, if they do not take and hold the RULE OF FAITH from Truth it self.* For such Men having once deviated from the right way, do likewise err in most Particulars; probably because they have not the Faculty of distinguishing Truths and Fallhoods, perfectly exercised to chuse what ought to be chosen. For if they had this, they would be ruled by the Divine SCRIPTURES. [Therefore as if any of Mankind should become a Beast, in such sort as those who were <sup>c</sup> bewitched by Circe; even so he hath lost his being a Man of God and abiding faithful to the Lord, who hath spurned against the Tradition of the Church, and skipp'd into the

<sup>c</sup> *Φαρισαϊ-  
 βειον.*



*the Opinions of human Sects* <sup>c</sup>,] (not of human Electi-  
 on, as Mr. S. blindly following Mr. *White* does I.  
 most absurdly translate it) *but he that hath returned*  
*from his Errors, and hearkened to the SCRIPTURES,* <sup>c</sup> *Asπίστων*  
*and conformed his Life to the Truth, is as it were ad-*  
*vanced from a Man to a God*] At the same rate he goes  
 on for several Pages together, taking the Scriptures  
 for an *indemonstrable Principle*, from which all Di-  
 vine Doctrines are to be demonstrated, and for the  
*Criterion* whereby they are to be tried; and charges  
 the Hereticks in such Words as we cannot find fitter  
 for our Adversaries, *As* (says he) *naughty Boys shut*  
*out their School Master, so these drive the Prophecies out of*  
*the Church, suspecting that they will chide and admonish*  
*them; and they patch together abundance of Falshoods*  
*and Fictions, that they may seem RATIONALLY*  
*not to admit the Scriptures.* Again, speaking of those  
 Hereticks affronting the Scriptures, he tells us *they*  
*oppose the* <sup>a</sup> *Divine Tradition with human Doctrines,* <sup>a</sup> *Θεία τε-*  
<sup>c</sup> *by other Traditions [delivered from Hand to Hand]* <sup>c</sup> *παράδοσις.*  
*that they may establish a Sect or Heresy.* Again he <sup>c</sup> *Δι' ἑτέρων*  
*says, they adulterate the Truth, and steal the Rule* <sup>c</sup> *παρενχειρί-*  
*so Faith, &c. but for ORAL Frauds they shall have* <sup>c</sup> *σεν.*  
 WRITTEN Punishments. But enough of this;  
 whosoever desires to see more of it, let him read on  
 where these Men to their own shame have directed  
 us, and see whether any Protestant can speak more  
 fully and plainly in this Controversy. The whole  
 Trust of the Papists is upon the equivocal Sense of the  
 Word *Tradition*. Which Word is commonly used  
 by the *Fathers* to signify to us the Scripture or Di-  
 vine Tradition, as *Clement* here calls it; but the *Pa-*  
*pists* understand it of their *unwritten Tradition*, and  
 to this they apply all those Passages in the *Fathers*  
 where Tradition is honourably mentioned. So Mr.  
*L.* deals with us in the Testimonies I have already  
 examined: And there is nothing of Argument in  
 those few which remain, but from the Ambiguity  
 of

PART of this Word ; which I need not shew of every one  
 IV. of them in particular, for whosoever shall read them  
 with this Key will find that they are of no force to  
 conclude what he drives at.

§. 5. As for his Citations out of the Council of *Trent*, by which he would prove it to be the persuasion of their present Church, that *Tradition* is the sole *Rule of Faith*; I have already shewn that that Council hath declared otherwise, and is otherwise understood by the Chief of their own *Writers*. And therefore he did prudently to conceal in an *Ec.* those choaking Words, in which the Council declares it self to *receive and honour, with equal pious affection and reverence, the Books of Scripture and unwritten Traditions*. And after a deal of shuffling, what a pitiful Account is it that he at last gives of that Council's putting Scripture constantly before *Tradition*, because Scripture being interpreted by *Tradition*, is of the same Authority *as if an Apostle or an Evangelist were present, and therefore no wonder they honour Scripture-testimony so as to put it before Tradition*; which is to say, that because Scripture is subordinate to *Tradition* and to be regulated by it, therefore it deserves to be put before it. Besides if *Scripture* and *Tradition* be but several Ways of conveying the Evangelical and Apostolical Doctrine, why should he imagine an *Evangelist* or *Apostle* to be more present by the Scripture than by *Oral Tradition*? Especially if it be considered, that he supposes Scripture to be an uncertain, and Tradition an infallible way of conveying this Doctrine.

#### SECT. II. Testimonies on the Behalf of Scripture.

§. 1. ALL that now remains, is to confirm the precedent *Discourse* by Testimonies of the most eminent Persons of the Church, in several Ages ; in which I shall not need to be large, being so happily prevented by that full Account which is given of the Sense of the *Ancients* in this Matter, in  
 the

the *Answer to Labyrinthus Cantuariensis*; which Mr. SECT. S. may, if he please, consult for his farther Con- II. viction.

§. 2. I begin with the Historical Account which Eusebius gives of committing the Gospel to Writing; which is to this purpose, viz. <sup>a</sup> *That the Ro-<sup>a</sup> Hist.* mans were not content with the Doctrine preached, Eccles. 1. unless it were also committed to Writing; and there-<sup>2. c. 14.</sup> fore did earnestly beg of Mark, Peter's Companion, that he would leave them a Monument in Writing of that Doctrine which had been delivered to them by Word of Mouth. And this was the Occasion of the Writing of St. Mark's Gospel. And when Peter did understand that this Work was publish'd (being suggested by the Divine Revelation of the Holy Spirit) it is said he was very much pleased with the ready and earnest desire of those Persons; and that by his Authority he confirmed this Writing, to the end that it might be every where read in the Church. As for St. Matthew and St. John, he tells us, <sup>b</sup> *That of all the Disciples, they two<sup>b</sup> Ibid. 1.* only have left Monuments in writing; of whom it is <sup>3. c. 18.</sup> also reported, they betook themselves to write, being drawn thereto by Necessity. Matthew, after he had preached the word of God to the Jews, and was resolved to go to other Nations, wrote his Gospel in the Language of his Country; and thus by the Diligence and Pains of writing, did abundantly supply the want of his Presence to those whom he left. And when Mark and Luke had publish'd their Gospel, it is reported that John (who had always used to preach the Word without writing it) being at length wrought upon by the same Reason, did betake himself to write. From this Account it is clear, that the Apostles thought it necessary, for the Preservation and secure Conveyance of the Christian Doctrine, that it should be put into Writing; and, that they judged this a better Way to supply the want of their Presence than oral tradition. Therefore the same Author tells us <sup>c</sup>, *That the<sup>c</sup> Ib. 31.* Disciples, who immediately succeeded the Apostles, as they



PART they travelled to preach the Gospel to those who had not

IV. yet heard the Word of Faith, did with great Care also deliver to them the Writings of the Holy Evangelists.

<sup>a</sup> Ib. c. 30. Again, <sup>a</sup> that Ignatius, as he travelled towards Rome, (where he was to suffer) exhorted the Churches of every City to hold fast the tradition of the Apostles; which (as also by Writing he testified) for greater Security he held necessary to be copied in writing.

§. 3. That the Hereticks of Old made the same Pretence which the Papists make now, of Oral Tradition in opposition to Scripture, the same Eusebius tells us; and withal, that Books are a sufficient Confutation of this Pretence. ‘ ‘ Those (says he) who  
 ‘ were of the Heresy of Artemon, said that all their  
 ‘ Forefathers and the Apostles themselves had received  
 ‘ and taught the same things which they also did,  
 ‘ and had preserved the true teaching unto the time  
 ‘ of Victor Bishop of Rome, whose successor Zephy-  
 ‘ rinus corrupted it. And this (saith he) would  
 ‘ have great Probability, were it not first of all con-  
 ‘ tradicted by the Scripture; and next, if there  
 ‘ did not remain the Writings of other Brethren  
 ‘ much more ancient than Victor’s Time, &c. in  
 ‘ the Books of all whom Christ’s Divinity is ac-  
 ‘ knowledged.’ And afterwards he tells us, that these Hereticks did change and corrupt the Scriptures to bring them to their Opinions; so Mr. S. tells us that the outward letter of Scripture ought to be corrected by tradition and sense written in Mens Hearts.

<sup>a</sup> Com. in St. Hierom also tells us, That <sup>a</sup> the Hereticks were  
 Isa. c. 19. wont to say, We are the Sons of the Wise, who did from the Beginning deliver down to us the Apostolical Doctrine; but he adds, that the true Sons of Judah adhere to the Scripture.

§. 4. That Scripture is sufficiently plain in all things necessary.

St. Chrysostom<sup>b</sup>, ' All things in the Divine Scrip-  
tures are plain and streight. Whatsoever things II.  
' are necessary are manifest.'

St. Austin having spoken of the Profoundness of<sup>b</sup> In 2  
Scripture, adds, ' Not that those things which<sup>c</sup> Thes. c. 2.  
' are necessary to Salvation are so hard to be come<sup>c</sup> Hom. 4.  
' at: But (*saith he*) when one hath there attained Epist. 3.  
' Faith, without which there is no pious and right  
' living, there are besides many dark and mysterious  
' things, &c. Again, <sup>d</sup> The manner of Speech in<sup>d</sup> Ibid.  
' Scripture, how easy is it to us all, though few  
' can penetrate to the bottom of it? Those things  
' which it plainly contains, it speaks without dis-  
' guise like a familiar Friend to the heart of the  
' learned and unlearned'. How will Mr. S. recon-  
cile this with his great Exception against Scripture?  
And what these things are, which are *plainly* con-  
tained in Scripture, the same *Father* tells us elsewhere  
in these Words, ' Among those things which are plain-<sup>c</sup> De Doct.  
ly set down in Scripture, all those things are to be found<sup>c</sup> Christ. 1.  
which comprehend Faith and good Manners. The same<sup>3. c. 9.</sup>  
St. Austin (as also Clement in the Book which Mr.  
White quoted) for the understanding of obscure Texts  
of Scripture, directs us not to Tradition, but to the  
plain Text, without which he expressly says, <sup>a</sup> there<sup>a</sup> De Uni-  
would be no way to understand them. tat. Eccl.

§. 5. That Scripture is so plain, as to be fit to<sup>c. 5.</sup>  
determine Controversies.

Justin sure thought so, when disputing with Try-  
pho, concerning a Point wherein the *Jew* had *Tradi-*  
*tion* on his side, he told him *he would bring such Proofs*  
(to the contrary) *as no Man could gainsay: Attend*  
(says he) *to what I shall recite out of the Holy Scrip-*  
*tures, Proofs which need not to be explained, but only*  
*to be heard.* Mr. White might have found likewise  
much to this purpose in his *Clement*.

But not to tire my Reader in a Point which the  
Ancients abound with, I shall only produce the Judg-<sup>b</sup> Theod.  
ment of Constantine<sup>b</sup> in that solemn Oration of his<sup>c</sup> Hist. l. 1.  
to c. 7.

PART to the Council of Nice; wherein he bewails their

IV. *mutual Oppositions, especially in Divine Things; concerning which they had the Doctrine of the Holy Spirit recorded in Writing: For (says he) the Books of the Evangelists and Apostles, and the Oracles of the Old Prophets, do evidently teach us what we ought to think of the Divine Majesty. Therefore laying aside all seditious Contention, let us determine the Matters in question by Testimonies out of the Divine Writings.* Not a word of any other Tradition but Scripture, which was held evident enough in those Days, though now Mr. S. tells us it is not sufficient to decide that Controversy about the *Divinity of Christ*.

§. 6. Lastly, That Scripture is the *Rule of Faith*.

\* L. 3. c. 1. *Irenæus* : 'The Method of our Salvation we have not known by any other but those Men by whom the Gospel came to us, which then they preached, but afterwards by the Will of God delivered it to us in the Scriptures, to be for the future the Foundation and Pillar of our Faith.

\* p. 314. St. *Cyprian*, the Church hath ever held a good Catholick; yet Mr. S. 'takes notice that he erred in a Point of Faith, and perhaps the rather, because \* Dial. 3. Mr. *Rushworth* 'had told him that he was not theirs Sect. 13. in this Controversy. For (says he) St. *Cyprian seems to think that the Resolution of Faith was to be made into Scripture, and not into Tradition*. But that we may not seem to accept of this Courtesy from him, nor yet wholly to despise it, I shall offer this one Testimony instead of many out of that *Father*; who being opposed with an Argument from Tradition, demands,

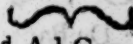
\* Epist. 74. ' " Whence have you that Tradition? Comes it from the Authority of the Lord, and of the Gospel, or from the Epistles of the Apostles? For God testifies that we are to do those things which are written, &c. If it be commanded in the Gospel, or contained in the Epistles or Acts of the Apostles, then let us observe it as a Divine and Holy Tradition.'

*Hilary*



## The RULE of FAITH.

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*Hilary*, <sup>a</sup> commends *Constantius* the Emperor for SECT. II.  
*regulating his Faith only according to those things which*  
*are written.* And to oblige him to deserve this   
 Commendation, he adds; *he who refuseth this is* <sup>d</sup> Ad. Con-  
*Antichrist, and who dissembles in it is Anathema.* stant.

• *Optatus*, concerning the Controversy with the Lib. 5.  
*Donatists*, asks who shall be Judge? and answers de Schism.  
 himself, *the Scriptures*: Which he illustrates by the Donat.  
 Similitude of a Father who delivered his Will orally  
 to his Children while he was living, but when he  
 was dying, caused it to be written *in lasting Tables*,  
 to decide all Controversies that might happen among  
 them after his Death. The Passage is large, and it  
 is obvious to apply it.

*Basil* maintaining the *Doxology* as it was used in his <sup>a</sup> De Sp.  
 Days, <sup>a</sup> ‘ Thus we received it from our Fathers; but Sancto,  
 ‘ *adds immediately*, This is not enough for us, that c. 7.  
 ‘ it is the Tradition of the Fathers, for they follow  
 ‘ the Authority of the Scriptures, making its Testi-  
 ‘ monies the Principles upon which they built.’ He  
 has indeed in the same *Book* <sup>a</sup> a Passage much insisted b C. 271  
 on by the Papists concerning unwritten Traditions; but  
 withal, he says those Traditions were *secretly* con-  
 veyed, which makes all the rest of no use to Mr. S.

*Chrysostom* <sup>c</sup> having mentioned several Heresies, c Hom. 8;  
 directs how they may be avoided, *viz.* <sup>c</sup> ‘ By at- in Epist.  
 ‘ tending to the Faith delivered, and looking upon all ad Heb.  
 ‘ that disagrees from that as adulterate. For c. 5.  
 ‘ *he* as those who gave Rules do not put Men upon a  
 ‘ curious Enquiry after many Measures, but bid  
 ‘ them keep to the Rule given; so is it in Opinions.  
 ‘ But no Body will attend to the Scripture; if we  
 ‘ did, we should not only not fall into Errors our-  
 ‘ selves, but also rescue those that are deceived. A-  
 ‘ gain <sup>a</sup> If we should be thoroughly conversant in d Hom. 52  
 ‘ the Scriptures, we should be instructed both in in Joh.  
 ‘ right Opinions and a good Life. *Again, Among*  
 ‘ *the many Sects of Christians* <sup>c</sup> it will be easy to judge e Hom. 33.  
 ‘ *of the right*, if we believe the Scriptures, because in Act.  
 Vol. III. X these Apost.

PART IV. ' these are plain and true: If any one agree with  
 ' these he is a Christian; if he contradicts them he  
 ' is far from this Rule.

<sup>a</sup> De Bapt. cont. Donat. l. 2. c. 6. St. *Austin* calls Scripture, ' the *Divine Ballance*  
 for the weighing of Doctrines. Again, *the Holy*  
*Scripture* (says he) *fixeth the Rule of our Doctrine.*

<sup>b</sup> Contr. Max. l. 3. And accordingly himself uses it both in his Dispute  
 with *Maximinus*, to whom he says, ' Neither  
 ' ought I now to alledge the *Nicene Council*, nor  
 ' thou that of *Ariminum*; for neither am I bound  
 ' to the Authority of the one, nor thou of the other.  
 ' Let us both contest with the Authorities of Scrip-  
 ' ture, which are Witnesses common to us both.'

<sup>c</sup> De Unitat. Eccl. c. 16. And also against the *Donatists* in these Words, ' Let  
 ' them if they can, demonstrate their Church, not  
 ' by the Talk or Rumours [*or Oral Tradition*] of  
 ' the *Africans*, not by the Councils of their own Bishops,  
 ' not by the Books of their Disputers, not by deceit-  
 ' ful Miracles, &c. but by the Prescript of the Law,  
 ' Prophets, &c. i. e. by all the Canonical Autho-  
 ' rities of the Holy Books.

<sup>d</sup> Comment. in Agg. c. 1. *Hierom* saith, ' Of those things, which without  
 ' the Authorities and Testimonies of the Scripture,  
 ' Men invent of their own Heads as from Apostoli-  
 ' cal Tradition, they are smitten with the Sword of  
 ' God.

<sup>e</sup> Paschal. L. 3. ' *Theophilus Alexander*, whom *Hierom* hath tran-  
 ' slated, calls Scripture more than once ' the Rule,  
 ' and the Testimonies of it the firm Foundation of  
 ' Doctrine. And again saith, <sup>bb</sup> It comes from a  
 ' Demoniacal Spirit that Men follow the Sophisms  
 ' of human Minds, and think any thing Divine that  
 ' wants the Authority of Scripture.

<sup>cc</sup> Hæret. Fabul. L. 3. *Theodoret* ' charges all Heresies upon the not fol-  
 ' lowing of Scripture; which he calls ' the inflexible  
 ' Rule of Truth. Again, We have learned the  
 ' Rule of Opinions from the Divine Scripture.

After

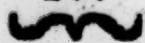
After the Fathers, I shall produce the Testimonies SECT. II.  
of two eminent Persons of later Times, *Gerson* and *Lyra*.

*Gerson* in his <sup>a</sup> *Book of the Tryal of Doctrines*, hath <sup>a</sup> Part. 1.  
this remarkable Passage; ‘ In the Tryal of Doctrines Confid. 2.  
‘ that which is first and principally to be considered,  
‘ is, Whether a Doctrine be conformable to the  
‘ Holy Scripture, &c. The Reason of this is, be-  
‘ cause the Scripture is delivered to us as a SUFFI-  
‘ CIENT and INFALLIBLE RULE for the  
‘ Government of the whole Ecclesiastical Body and  
‘ its Members to the end of the World. So that  
‘ it is such an Art, such a Rule or Exemplar, that  
‘ any other Doctrine which is not conformable to it,  
‘ is to be renounced as Heretical, or to be accounted  
‘ suspicious or not at all appertaining to Religion.  
‘ Again, <sup>b</sup> It is evident how pernicious the Rejection De Di-  
‘ of the Holy Scripture is, and how certain a Pre- stinct. Ve-  
‘ paratory for the reception of Antichrist. Once rar. Vifi-  
‘ more, <sup>c</sup> What Mischief, what Danger, what Con- on, a fal-  
‘ fusion hath happened through Contempt of the sis.  
‘ Holy Scripture, which sure is sufficient for the Serm in  
‘ Government of the Church (else Christ must have die Cir-  
‘ been an imperfect Lawgiver) let us ask Experi- cumcif.  
‘ ence, &c. &c.

‘ *Lyra* also writes thus <sup>a</sup>; As in Philosophy, <sup>a</sup> Prolog.  
‘ Truth is discovered by reducing things to their de Lib.  
‘ first and self-evident Principles; so in the Wri- Bib. &c.  
‘ tings delivered by the Holy Doctors, Truth is  
‘ discovered as to matters of Faith, by reducing  
‘ them to the canonical Scriptures.

Sir, You know how easy it were to swell up a large  
Volume with Testimonies to this purpose; especially  
if I should take the Course that Mr. White does, to  
hale in Quotations tho’ ever so impertinent; or use the  
wretched importunity which Mr. S. does to perswade  
them to be pertinent. But these Testimonies which I  
have nakedly set down, leaving them to speak for  
themselves.



PART  
IV.

*themselves, are enough to satisfy an unpassionate Reader, such an one as dares trust himself with the use of his own Eyes and Reason. As for that sort of Men which chuse to follow Noise rather than Light, we must be content to leave them to the blind Conduct of those Guides who having no better Means to keep their Followers to them, go Hallowing in the Dark, and fill their Ears with the insignificant Sounds of Infallibility, Indefectibility, Self-evidence and Demonstration.*

*Concerning the Appendix wherein you are particularly challenged, I hope for an Account very shortly, and so take leave.*

SIR,

Your Affectionate Friend,

JOHN TILLOTSON.

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*The End of the Third Volume.*